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Pt. 4

LIFE AND TEACHINGS
OF
BHAGWAN DEV ATMA

—:0:—
**Teacher of the One True
Science-Grounded Religion
for all mankind**

AND
" **Founder of the true Religious
Society of the Dev Samaj.**

—:0:—
PART IV.

**His further Evolution in his Unique
Higher forces culminating in taking
up of his Unique Life-vow.**

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ERRATUM.

We are very sorry that through an oversight the numbering of some chapters of this book has been wrongly printed. The readers will please correct it as given below:—

Page 298 Chapter XXII instead of XXIII

„ 308	„	XXIII	„	XX
„ 323	„	XXIV	„	XXV
„ 329	„	XXV	„	XXIX
„ 354	„	XXVI	„	XXV
„ 369	„	XXVII	„	XXVI
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PREEACE TO THE FIRST EDITION OF PART I.

Bhagwan Dev Atma—the most worshipful founder of the Dev Samaj and the discoverer and teacher of the One True Science-grounded Universal system of religion for all mankind—lived an ideal life on this earth. He was born with the heredity of unique psychic powers, which he evolved under suitable environments and by making phenomenal sacrifices and renunciations and surrender of all physical, material and mental powers. The highest psychic forces, which he ultimately evolved and which completed his soul-organism, are the following:—

(1) Complete and all-sided love for all that is true in all relations of man.

(2) Complete and all-sided hatred for all that is untrue or false in all relations of man.

(3) Complete and all-sided love for all that is good in all relations of man.

(4) Complete and all-sided hatred for all that is wrong or sinful in all relations of man.

It is these grandest, most glorious and absolutely wonderful powers which alone can complete soul-organism and make life ideal.

This ideal life, possessed of the highest sense of love for truth and goodness and absolute repulsion for untruth and wrong, was and is something utterly incomprehensible to millions of men possessed of happiness-based low loves and low hates. Hence the present humanity, instead of warmly greeting such a unique manifestation, took up an attitude of violent opposition to him and engineered horrid processes of persecuting and prosecuting Bhagwan Dave Atma, and not only threatened to take away his life, but actually made murderous attempts by firing pistol shots at him, which forms the most gloomy chapter of humanity's history. But this was natural. Did not Herbert Spencer write in his famous book "Education":—

"If by any system of culture an ideal human being could be produced, is it not doubtful whether he could be fit for the world as it now is? May we not on the contrary suspect that his too keen sense of rectitude and too elevated standard of conduct would make life intolerable or even impossible?"

Herbert Spencer was quite right in his calculations, but he little knew that such an ideal being had actually appeared on this earth in the person of Bhagwan Dev Atma. The life of highest psychic senses and the ideal Standard of conduct which Bhagwan Dev Atma lived, really made life intolerable for him.

In this world which is so completely hypnotised by the fascinating form of untruth, hypocrisy and world worship, that it feels them as the breath of life even in the so-called Religions and any person who raises voice against them is considered a heretic worthy of extreme punishment.

But these mighty and most glorious forces carried in their very texture the elements of triumph. Hence though Bhagwan Dev Atma suffered most acutely at the hands of thousands of human beings—especially the worshippers of one God—for whose highest good he worked with phenomenal energy, his achievements have been also none the less grand and most glorious.

The story of the evolution of such a unique life cannot fail to be of utmost in-

terest and profit for all *adhikari* (fit) souls, as the only type which the humanity must follow, if it is ever to come out of the throttling yoke of all the happiness-based low loves and low hates which invoke on the head of man untold miseries, absolute disharmony in all relations, soul darkness and soul annihilation.

We offer this short biographical sketch of Bhagwan Dev Atma and the brief outline of his teachings, with a marked consciousness of our imperfections and want of ability, but with an honest conviction, that it would serve as a precursor for fuller and more complete life sketches of such a unique personality by some abler hands.

It is proposed to publish this biography in parts, every part covering a specific period of Bhagwan Dev Atma's life. Three parts of this book have already been published and now this fourth part is offered to the public. Others are also in course of preparation.

Lahore,
December 1932.

Publisher.

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LIFE AND TEACHINGS OF BHAGWAN DEV ATMA.

PART IV.

HIS FURTHER EVOLUTION IN HIS UNIQUE HIGHER FORCES CULMINATING IN TAK- ING UP OF HIS UNIQUE LIFE-VOW.

Introductory Chapter.

In the third part of this book we dealt with one phase of the evolution of Bhagwan Dev Atma's unique powers--powers, which prompted him to produce good and eradicate evil in several relations. The group of these two sets of psychic forces found great many channels and opportunities for manifesting themselves after Bhagwan came to Lahore,

and they soon brought him in the forefront of public life as the acknowledged leader, the best orator, one of the greatest journalists, a fearless reformer and a moral dynamic force. It was in Lahore again that besides these two sets of highest psychic forces, Bhagwan found suitable conditions to evolve another set of unique forces i.e., Love for Truth and Repulsion for Untruth which were still in their elementary stage. These forces, as they grew in him, made him a thoroughgoing and uncompromising critic of all beliefs, doctrines theories, established creeds, world-wide dogmas, etc. whether accepted by himself or by others. He could not respect a thing simply because it happened to be old or new, revealed or unrevealed, age-long or fresh, religious or secular, scriptural or non-scriptural, popular or unpopular, but he loved what was truth and hated what was untruth. The gradual evolution of this set of forces made him such a fearless and most daring exponent of what he believed or found to be true, that those around him used to get nervous at his frank denunciation of the hypocrisy, insincerity, untruth or positive falsehood wherever found. This part IV of his life

would deal very briefly with the story of the evolution and expression of these highest psychic forces in so far as they led him to give up his permanent and respectable government appointment in the Education Department and devote his entire wonderful powers in the service of humanity.

Before we deal with the evolution of the unique psychic forces of Love of Truth and hatred for Untruth in Bhagwan's wonderful soul, let us explain some preliminary questions as to what we mean by Truth; what are the conditions requisite for seeing and grasping truth; what is the mental condition of man appropriate to receive truth and who can be a lover of Truth etc., etc.

What is meant by Truth? All that really exists in Nature and not in the fancy of man is Truth. Every event in Nature, every occurrence or phenomenon in Nature, every object in Nature, every uniformity in Nature is Truth. What do we then mean by True knowledge? True knowledge means, knowledge gained, by our respective normal senses and soul powers of things, objects and events in the Cosmic organism as they *in fact* are or

happen. To conceive of objects or occurrences in Nature not as they really are or happen but as our mind predisposes us to believe is an illusion.

How to gain true knowledge? True knowledge is possible for any man only to the extent that he possesses adequate and corresponding senses or psychic powers for receiving it. All men are not alike so far these psychic forces are concerned. Individuals differ in their knowledge according to the difference in number and intensity of these knowledge-giving forces. Those who possess greater number of these knowledge-giving forces developed to a sufficient extent, find a wider world of knowledge opened to them than those who are devoid of any of them or are deficient in them.

Our various senses of sight, touch, taste, smell and hearing give us a preliminary knowledge of the various objects in Nature. Sense of sight opens the world of light and colour. Sense of hearing opens the world of sound waves taking the forms of low or loud sounds, noise or tune. Sense of

touch gives us knowledge of the hardness or softness etc. of things and objects. Senses of taste and smell open to us the world of things being sour or sweet, bitter or saltish etc., and the world of different kind of odours respectively. Any person devoid of any of these senses would be, so far his direct knowledge is concerned, dead to the world that these senses open. A man born-blind would have no direct knowledge of colours and hence of natural beauties, scenes, and artificial ornamentation or decoration. All animals and men who possess these various outward senses get the knowledge open to them.

Above these are those various progressive mental forces of reason and thought which have evolved only in man and are absent in the entire animal world. It is these progressive mental forces which have helped man to probe beyond the surface reality of the objects to the underlying uniformities of Nature, known as laws, and to yoke to his chariot wheel various forces of Nature and thus control sea, air, land, electricity and other powers in Nature and thereby develop various marvellous sciences and objects of civilization. This kind

of knowledge can be gained not merely through outward senses but through progressive mental powers by observing, sifting and experimenting the knowledge gained by sense perceptions.

Besides these faculties there are various lower passions having their basis in the sense of pleasure or pain which man has inherited from his animal ancestors and by the assistance of the progressive mental powers has developed them into low loves and low hates. These are love of money and possession, love of tasteful things, love of power or position, love of lust, love of name, fame, etc., and low hates like jealousy, vindictiveness &c. These low loves and low hates open the world of various pleasures and pains which their gratification or dissatisfaction affords. They abound in the whole humanity and are the root cause of all sins, evils and falsehoods and the consequent misery rampant on this earth.

Higher than these are those various psychic powers which have developed in only some of the blessed human beings. These are called altruistic or other-seeking forces as opposed

to selfish forces of low loves and low hates which produce ruthless sacrifice of the rights, claims and even existence of others for their own gratification. Such altruistic forces are known as sympathy, charity, mercy, benevolence, philanthropy, gratitude, reverence, resulting in disinterested service of the body, mind or soul of others etc. The consciousness which a man possesses through one or the other of such altruistic forces is absolutely wanting in any man devoid of it. A butcher is blind and deaf to the pains and agonies of animal life which a compassionate heart perceives with horror and tears, and hence while one delights in destroying, the other delights in saving, protecting and nursing animal life.

Then there are those various highest psychic forces which are called *Dev Shakties* and which not only complete the organism of human soul but enable it to get absolute freedom from all dwarfing and destructive low loves and low hates and walk steadily and for ever the path of progressive evolution of higher life. It is these highest psychic forces which have manifested themselves as complete

love of Truth and Goodness and complete hatred for Untruth and Wrong. It is these unique psychic forces which are possessed by the Dev Atma. These unique forces enable the possessor to gain knowledge of those most precious truths relating to the nature of soul, laws of its evolution and dissolution, the destructive nature of low loves and low hates and the laws of getting true freedom from them, the nature, beauty and glory of higher or altruistic forces and the laws of their evolution in man, and the true, supreme ideal of man's life, which are completely a sealed book to those devoid of these forces. Hence as regards these most wonderful truths none but Dev Atma alone can be a true teacher; because none but he lives in that world of knowledge which reveals what should be done and what should not be done in various relations of man with human as well as with animal, plant and inanimate worlds and their various beings.

Why do People resort to Untruth?
 People resort to untruth because they are under the grip of the various low loves and low hates. We see all around

that not only are persons incapable of accepting truth but in countless cases they abjure truth and *willingly* embrace untruth. Why is it so? The fact is that though in his evolution from animal world, man has acquired, in rudimentary form, the germs of progressive intellect, his soul-organism has not thereby become complete i.e., though his bodily organism has attained to completion so far its various limbs and organs are concerned, his soul has not developed those highly necessary powers which could complete its organism and thus, on the one hand, protect it from the evil effects of destructive forces of low loves and low hates and, on the other, develop higher harmony with the evolutionary process working in Nature, and thus put him on the path of progressive evolution. Man is not only devoid of such evolutionary forces but he possesses in his soul-constitution such heart forces of low loves and low hates as lead it most powerfully to the path of Untruth. Being ruled by such powers it is inevitable for man to love untruth.

A man possessed of low love of imagination delights in believing in imaginary and

false stories and fictions. A man ruled by the low loves of wealth, property, fame, name, power &c., has, as a rule, recourse to falsehood in order to obtain them. He composes false poems in order to flatter others. He gives false evidence, cooks up false cases, forges documents, publishes false advertisements in order to achieve his object. He stoops to hypocrisy and fraud. A man possessed of the low love of self resorts to untruth to uphold his false beliefs and practices of his own creed, shows false humility by calling himself prince of sinners when he is not such; sings hymns, *bhajans* or poems in temples, churches, pagodas etc. and offers prayers there which are false and which his own heart even does not believe in. A man possessed of the low love of vindictiveness manufactures false accusations against others and slanders them without any foundation. A man possessed of the low love of jealousy suppresses true praise of others and heaps on their heads all kinds of lies to defame them.

Hence those incompletely organised souls who are ruled and dominated by happiness-based low loves of fancy, property, name,

fame, self etc., and low hates resulting in revenge and consequent injuries to others, can not but have a recourse to lies. They can not but like untruth and thus grow enamoured of it. It is because man is charmed by untruth that we find in every village and hamlet, city and town, all over the world, reign of falsehood. No effect can be produced without a corresponding cause. Hence so long the cause remains in tact, the effect must follow as a matter of course. So long man is dominated by forces that lead him to untruth (viz. low loves and low hates), he can not but love untruth. As it is impossible to hatch a man out of a hen's egg, in the same way it is impossible that a man possessed of above psychology can grow love of Truth from the soil of his heart. Nay such a soil of the human heart is on the contrary fatal to the very existence of love of Truth. Such a heart can never grow even a real desire for Truth. In absence of any real desire it is superfluous to expect such a soul to investigate Truth. Those therefore among the theists who claim that they accept Truth wherever and whenever found are living in

a fool's paradise. Their claim is absolutely childish and shows their abject ignorance. What to say of their succeeding in growing powers of love for Truth, these psychically incomplete souls dominated by untruth-loving psychic forces are unable even to appreciate the Master soul who has evolved the unique forces of love of Truth and repulsion for Untruth in himself. Nay more often than not they feel repulsion for him.

Again it is one thing to be compelled to follow wrong course under the lash of a most powerful low love or low hate, but it is quite different when a man enjoys and adores untruth. In the former case the victim may at least say that though helpless in the grip of a mighty force, he was not so blind as not to see the wrong in his action. But in the latter case the man becomes a devotee, a worshipper, a champion of Untruth. Are there in the world devotees of Untruth? Yes, there are; and their number is legion. As a devotee sings praises in honour of his deity, so a devotee of Untruth bursts into rapturous songs in honour of his deity—the

Untruth. He preaches the great necessity of untruth in every-day life. He considers it as a best friend in his struggles to gain happiness and material things of life. He does not confine his adoration only to his individual case. He feels its great need even for the benefit of his family, for the great good of his society, of his creed and his nation, etc. He has couched his devotion for untruth in sayings found in books and traditions. A Punjabi saying says:—

“मैं तां झूठ कडे जमै, झूठ आवे मेरे सैंयां कमै”

“I and untruth were born in a litter; Untruth is helpful to me in hundreds of ways.”

The Persian poet of highest fame, Saadi, says:—

“دروغ مصلحت آمیز به از راستی فتنه خیز”

“A convenient untruth is better than a troublesome Truth.”

A Hindu Rishi has left a saying:—

“न ब्रूयात् सत्यम् प्रियम्”

“Never speak an unpleasant truth.”

A saying prevalent all over the world says:—

“The wheel of the world can never smoothly turn without the lubrication of the oil of Untruth.”

One great section of Christians have taught that means are justified by the end. Hence they have boldly laid down that recourse to falsehood is advisable if it can bring a soul to the fold of Christ.

The founder of Arya Samaj also preached a great necessity of this weapon of untruth when he said that if Shankeracharya adopted Vedantism merely to demolish Jainism and not as an honest creed, it was so far good.

An English proverb says:—

“Everything is fair in Love and War.”

Thus untruth has cast on mankind the magic of its charm, the spell of its fascination, and the great lure of seduction for it, and thus utterly captivated it. The untruth-ridden souls have advocated the use of untruth as of great utility in religion. In the name of religion man has fabricated fibs and have given them wide currency. He has created several gods and goddesses, saints and *pirs* and their astonishing miracles. He has created false heavens and

false bells to capture man. All these fibs which can not stand for a second the lurid light of fact and truth are preserved in books and these are called religious scriptures. These fibs have won the allegiance of men who, on the one hand, have lacked those critical powers of Logic and reason and scientific attitude of mind and, on the other, have been ruled by imagination and dominated by blind faith. Nay, Reason, Logic and Science are tabooed in the domain of religion. The so-called religion itself is based on blind faith. This utterly harmful blind faith co-operates with uncontrolled fancy of man and man has thus gone straight way into the mouth of Untruth. Such souls abhor the very idea of test being applied to their various beliefs. They know that scientific test would shake the very foundation of their so-called religious beliefs which are nothing but fibs. Hence all that they want is mere belief or blind faith and not Truth. They feel and think that this blind faith and Untruth work as potent factors for the success in their individual life and in the life of society. "There is no God," they say, "but we have to keep or create one in order to control masses."

They find satisfaction in this line of conduct.
How painful!

What is the difference between true knowledge and love of truth? A question may arise here that *when a man is dominated by the love of untruth, how is it that he possesses true knowledge in one or the other department of Nature?* Let us hasten to reply that true knowledge and love of truth are not one and the same thing. Love of truth leads to true knowledge, but true knowledge does not lead to love of truth. Leaving certain insane persons there is hardly a man all over the globe who does not possess external and internal normal senses and hence does not get some true knowledge of things and individuals around him. Even animals possessed of these senses obtain true knowledge through them. But one can't say that all these men and animals possess the love of truth. As animals do possess some elementary knowledge even in the absence of the progressive mental forces which have evolved in man, so millions of human beings all over the world do get this or that kind of true knowledge, though they are devoid of the various progressive forces of the love of truth. Some fortunate souls have, however, got the privilege of growing love for true

knowledge in one or the other department of Nature. But *complete love of truth and nothing but truth in all its phases* could evolve only in the soil of a heart which possesses the heredity of growing such powers. The knowledge that this is my house and that is my land; this is my father and that is my child; this is iron and that is brass; this is wheat and that is barley; this is milk and that is water; this is cow and that is bullock; this is horse and that is ass; this is book and that is slate etc. is open to all men who are in normal state and possess various senses. But this does not predicate even love for *true knowledge*, not to say anything of the *love of truth*. Again who is there who, every hour of the day cherishes a deep desire that he may know facts and truths in Nature as they are? How is it possible for such a true longing? (to know the facts as they are) to emanate from a heart which is not only void of love of truth but is dominated by heart forces that lead to positive untruth and which find happiness or profit in paying homage to and accepting the lead of falsehood?

(4)

The next question is: "What congenial heart or suitable soil of soul is then neces-

sary for the evolution of the various powers of complete and all-sided love of truth and complete and all-sided repulsion or hatred for untruth?" In reply we have to say that that soul alone can evolve this unique love and hatred who, having been born with hereditary germs of these powers,

(1) may be absolutely free from the slavery to all low loves and low hates;

(2) may have awakened complete consciousness regarding the evolution and dissolution of the organism of soul;

(3) may have awakened true and full desire for the highest evolution of soul, may have realized soul evolution as the supreme object of his life and may possess the necessary capacity to follow it under all circumstances;

(4) may realize fully and completely the great principle that the light which reveals the entire philosophy of soul—its evolution and dissolution, its supreme ideal etc.—can generate only by search after truth and truth alone in various Cosmic relations; and that the assimilating and absolute pursuit of truth and truth alone can be productive of true goodness.

We can hence see that though it is possible for normal man to acquire true knowledge in one or the other department of Nature, it is not possible for love of truth to evolve in any soul who does not fulfil the above conditions.

In Bhagwan Dev Atma's soul all these and other necessary conditions were fulfilled. He himself says, "Owing to my special hereditary heritage, I came into this world possessed of a unique heart. I possessed the full capacity of evolving all *Satwik* (altruistic) and *Dev Shakties* (highest psychic forces) which lead to the completion of soul-organism. My intellectual powers also possessed a potentiality of extraordinary capacity which could quite efficiently co-operate with unique heart forces. Hence when a powerful feeling of love for knowledge evolved in me and it impelled me to become studious, my intellectual powers responded fully to the demand made on them, both at the time of reflecting over the acquired ideas, sifting, sorting and analysing the stored up facts and at the time of discovering any great principle underlying them. Within a short

time I became extremely critical in my judgments and views and all these powers of critique were yoked to the service of love of truth. The dominating force which practically swamped my intellect was not any low love for money, fame, name, popular applause, self or any other low love of jealousy, vindictiveness, vanity, etc.—the last group never sprouted in my soul at any time—but the chief controlling force of my life was love of truth. Love of matters relating to higher religion appeared in predominant form in me even during the period of my childhood. No other desire force or love was so strong as to overcome that love. All these heart and intellect forces formed my unique capital to begin life with.”

Being swayed by low loves and low hates man is helpless to remain under the cloud of soul-darkness and false beliefs in the domain of true religion. Various kinds of teachings and beliefs that go under the name of religion are not all true. More often than not they are mutually contradictory and absolutely conflicting. Even devotees of the same sect hold antagonistic view upon the

same religion. This condition of things has existed for centuries. Millions are following one or the other belief but they seem to feel no anxiety to find out truth for themselves. Untruth prevails all around them. They themselves believe easily refutable falsehoods and pass well contented and happy life. Their ideals are low and hence untrue; their beliefs are false; their theories are false; they indulge in falsehood in thought and speech; they live a life of sin and thus develop abnormal love of or harmony with falsehood. In this condition of soul-life, is it possible for them to ever wish for true knowledge or true light respecting their soul-life and all beliefs relating to it? The utmost scope of their activities is blindly limited to the keeping of body and soul together and the gratification of some low desires and low passions called low loves and low hates. Hence acquisition of true knowledge respecting the soul-life and its higher evolution does not and cannot form any item in the programme of their lives. They live in absolute darkness about their soul and its good or bad courses of life. They are damagingly indifferent to the serious problems of soul-life. This

darkness and this indifference gives them no trouble whatsoever. How very extremely painful!

(5)

There is no gainsaying the fact that evolution of man in Nature is a great miracle. But so long as man is ruled by such heart forces (low loves and low hates) which drag him to untruth, his condition is extremely deplorable. In that case he cannot avoid the path of untruth and cannot follow the path of truth. The path of untruth cannot but degrade and harm the soul-life of man. Untruth is not a food for soul. It is a veritable poison. Hence every man who is untruth-loving is most pitiable,—be he a Raja or Maharaja, commander-in-chief or a leader, cultured or uncultured, degree holder or a title holder etc. As it is impossible for a man to breathe without lungs, in the same way it is impossible for a man to evolve highest psychic light without various psychic powers of love of truth. As outward light is needed to dispel outer darkness, so is the highest psychic light evolved by various forces of love of truth indispensably

needed to dispel ignorance, and darkness relating to soul-life.

(6)

Mental enlightenment is a great blessing. But as even highest intellectual capacity is absolutely incapable of liberating man from low loves and low hates—and is it not true that many of the highest intellects are ruled by mammon lust ego worship etc?—in the same way it is incapable of leading man to the path of Truth. Even such souls being slaves to the acquired or cherished false beliefs or superstitions and various low loves and low hates very often consciously uphold untruth and propagate it to subserve the ends of their false beliefs or low loves and thus deepen the darkness of their own soul-life.

How blessed then is he for himself and humanity who has appeared in the course of man's evolution with a unique heredity of the forces of love of truth and hatred for untruth, and who in suitable conditions has evolved these various highest powers and thereby produced in himself the unique psychic light which dispells all soul-darkness and illumines soul-life, showing its nature,

its evolution, its dissolution, its supreme ideal, etc.

The various forces of love of truth which evolved gradually in this master soul, the Bhagwan Dev Atma, (the nature and the drama they enacted in his life the description whereof will be the burden of this part and others) are as follows:—

1. Love of speaking the Truth.
 2. Love for speaking clear and unambiguous Truth.
 3. Love for acquiring true knowledge.
 4. Love for assimilating the Truth.
 5. Love for the fulfilment of true pledges or engagements.
 6. Love for the propagation of Truth.
 7. Love for espousing the Truth loyally under all circumstances and at all costs.
 8. Love for investigation of Truth in the domain of religion.
-

CHAPTER I



Evolution in Bhagwan Dev Atma of the love of speaking truth and of doing so clearly and unambiguously.



Bhagwan Dev Atma came to Lahore in the month of November, 1873. He believed then in the Vedantic philosophy which he had imbibed at the feet of his revered Guru, Pandit Shiv Dayal Singhji at Rookee. He possessed unquestioning faith in God as the so-called maker of this universe. He had given up his beliefs in those numberless gods and goddesses which every orthodox Hindu entertains as something positively real. He had also abjured various false rites and ceremonies which are current among orthodox Hindus. He had renounced all such usages and observances which were false and which claimed their birth from the greed and fancy of the priestly class which had exercised their dwarfing sway over Hindu minds

for centuries. The one book that appealed to him then was *Shrimad Bhagwat*. It was also his daily and fixed programme to perform various devotional exercises such as reciting *astotaras*, reading of sacred scriptures, offering of prayers, worship etc. As he had developed the masterful and unique love for goodness and complete hatred for evil, he could not give up what purported, according to his accepted beliefs, to do good to his soul. Hence his professions and practices were harmoniously blended. He followed whatever he believed to be good and he renounced without counting the cost whatever he believed to be wrong. This remained an unbroken and undeviating course of his conduct throughout his life. Hence those who came in contact with him at any stage of his life, whether they were friends or foes, trusted him implicitly. His students and his officers, his colleagues and his castemen, and various others who had any dealings with him implicitly believed in his word.

The influences of his revered Gururji had developed one great psychic force in him i.e. love for speaking the truth. How this

beautiful but a rare trait grew in him is thus described by Bhagwan Dev Atma :—

“I was hardly twenty years and 6 months of age when, along with my wife, I got myself initiated as disciple of my Guru. We both had deep reverence for him. We had full faith in his teachings. Every one of his words appeared to us sacred and worth following. His commands we received with joy and fulfilled them with an eager heart. It was in this frame of mind that a few days before initiating us, he wrote and sent to us a discourse for our benefit which among other things contained the following injunction : —

‘Never speak an untruth even though you may have to suffer any amount of trouble or loss’.

“On the one hand our hearts were in a fit state to assimilate these teachings and on the other our Guru was himself a lover of truth speaking and possessed complete hatred for speaking an untruth. Hence his words possessed a living force. Having infused in our hearts the living influences of his this real love, he created in us love for speaking

the truth and hatred against speaking falsehood. This was the first and primary force of love of truth which developed in me and my wife at that time. This was indeed a most valuable force. This marked the beginning of the evolution in my soul of all those various constituents of love of truth which were to evolve, along with the love of Goodness and the hatred for Evil; that most blessed, unique and complete soul-life which Nature had meant to bless me with."

"No man likes to have trouble in life or to suffer loss. Why did then our Guru ask us to face every trouble and bear up with every loss but never to speak an untruth? Being a well-wisher of his soul our Guru possessed at that time at least this much consciousness that those who indulge in untruth in order to save themselves from worldly trouble or loss necessarily harm their soul-life. Hence *one who wishes good of his soul should never speak an untruth whatever may be the risk or trouble involved in that conduct.* We wished good to our souls. Hence his words went home to our heart and hatred against speaking falsehood awakened in us.

The awakening of this force led us to be cautious in our speech. A habit of speaking the truth grew and developed in us. Sometimes our Guruji used to read to us a beautiful couplet of Tulsi Das which is as under:—

“सत्य वचन आधीनता, पर त्वि मात समान;
इतने में हरि न मिले, तो तुलसी दास जमान।”

Translation:—I stand your guarantee, if truth, humility and maintaining a mental attitude of considering women other than your wife as mothers, do not take you to God.”

Those who can understand the psychology of persons who speak untruth, would be able to realize the uniqueness of even this one phase of the love of truth. To speak the truth even when loss or trouble faces you demands a very high and elevated condition of heart.

At Roorkee Bhagwan could make no further progress in this respect because the environmental stimuli were absent there which could awaken various other constituents of the unique force of the love of truth in Bhagwan Dev Atma's soul.

Though love for speaking truth and hated against speaking untruth had grown a mighty motive force in Bhagwan's life at Roorkee, this love loses half its charm and more than half its glory if the possessor of it confines himself merely to the letter and not to the full spirit of truth speaking. There are some very rare persons who are anxious to speak the truth and yet those few are not always resolved to bring out their full meaning. They use language which is true enough but it serves to conceal their thought rather than reveal it. In the great Hindu Epic Mahabharat, one of the Pandvas under the guidance of Sri Krishna spoke words true enough but which carried absolutely different meaning. One hero fighting on the opposite side and one elephant bore the same name. It was the elephant that was dead. But the great Pandva through the persuasion of Sri Krishna was induced to announce the death of the elephant in a way that it carried the sense that the hero bearing that name was dead. This insincere statement was indulged in to bring about the death of the father of that hero who

was himself a great hero. It was clear to those trafficking in this dangerous game that the news of the death of his son would cause the death of the father, a more invincible opponent.

Among the learned Pandits of our land an honourable pride is taken for distorting the true meaning of texts and giving several enforced interpretations of a clear context. In the issue of September 1919 a short life sketch of Maha Mahopadhaya Pandit Mahesh Chandra Niya Ratan C. I. E., appeared in the columns of the Hindi monthly *Saraswati*. In the course of this biographical sketch the learned author wrote about Niya Ratan:—

“Once some errors crept into the Sanskrit selection which he had compiled for the matriculation candidates. Several critics exposed those errors. Niya Ratan wrote a rejoinder under the title of the ‘*Prakrit Kutha*’. In this little volume he proved his errors to be true statements.”

“This line of conduct or custom prevails in our land since days of yore. It has been the special pride or unique feature of Bharat

that our learned Pandits in order to keep up their reputation for high learning prove fallacies to be right thought. "Saraswati Viyakaran" is the living illustration of this trait in our land. Niya Ratan was a child of Bharat which valued this feature. If he therefore indulged in this trait, he committed no offence or did no wrong''.

Hence if love for speaking the truth is to shine bright and undimmed by the fog of insincerity it ought to be accompanied by the *Sapashat Kathan anurag* (i.e. love for clear and unambiguous expressions which carry the absolutely *true spirit* along with the true words). This love when awakened enables a man to state the truth as it is, with all the sincerity of expression and with no tinge of hypocrisy.

The absence of this great psychic force in mankind along with the sway, on its heart, of low loves and low hates has led it to hypocrisy in various forms and guises. Even the great leaders and founders of various faiths have been betrayed into dark alleys and even thoroughfares of falsehood, because of the absence of this great force in them. It has

often happened that when any man has undergone some radical change in his beliefs, and he feels that he is not able to agree with those around him, he does not make a clean and unvarnished admission but takes shelter under hypocrisy. He does avail himself of words and phrases which help to conceal the real meaning of the change in him and gives an impression to the world that his beliefs and of the world around him were not at all at variance. *It is an expediency and not sincerity that seems to rule the mankind.* The present interpreters of the old world faiths are as a rule guilty of this dangerous weakness. They distort texts and put new wine into old bottles and thus give a false lead and create any amount of evil in the world.

Bhagwan Dev Atma possessed not only love for speaking the truth but evolved equally love for sincerity. This brought him in violent conflict with the world as it was and is constituted at present of persons in whom sincerity in their lath and deeds is almost absent. Bhagwan Dev Atma writes in his Autobiography, Part I:—

“The evolution of these constituents of love of truth not only made it hard for me to deal with persons around me who were devoid of them and led to great friction and loss of peace of my mind, but made it difficult for me to wade through the pages of various so-called sacred scriptures full as they are of myths and fictions. With all my desire to go through them I could not, in certain cases, finish them from beginning to end.”



CHAPTER II.

Love for acquiring true knowledge.

As already mentioned in chapter XX of Part III of this book, association with Babu Navin Chandra Roy (who on his own part felt an equally strong attraction for him) and breathing in the new and bracing atmosphere of study, of reflection, discussion, open and unrestricted expression of views on diverse important subjects, awakened in Bhagwan.

(1) Deep and lasting interest in all kinds of true knowledge;

(2) Love for reading all such books, journals and other literary productions which dealt with the religious, social and political problems;

(3) Contemplative and reflective mental disposition which made him shun all surface knowledge and go to the roots of the questions which formed the subject matter of study; and

(4) Avidity and open mind for exchange of views on all matters of general interest.

This awakening led Bhagwan Dev Atma

(a) To engage the services of a Pandit who daily gave him lessons in the Sanskrit language;

(b) To study further and promote the knowledge of English language with the help of an enlightened English educated gentleman;

(c) To read all such papers and journals in Hindi, Urdu and English which he could get;

(d) To study Bengali unaided and all by himself in order to study, from the original sources, productions of eminent leaders of Brahmo Samaj in Bengali and other Bengali literature.

This powerful force of seeking true knowledge made Bhagwan an irrepressible and humble student at the threshold of knowledge. He was posted as a Drawing Master in the Government High School at Lahore. There was a small Library of the school which was contained in one almirah only. Bhagwan was attracted to it and began to study books from it. The one book which appealed to him most and consi-

derably impressed his mind was Buckle's "History of Civilization in England". The first serious volume on Ethics and Philosophy which touched his heart, was Comte's Moral Philosophy. Brahmo Samaj literature he loved to read. He studied Bengali with the clear object of reading Brahmo Samaj literature in that language, as Bengal was the home of Brahmo Samaj. Some of the Brahmo books which he deeply appreciated in those days and which exercised great influence on his mind were the following:—

- (1) Dharm Vigyan. (2) Shalok Sangrah.
- (3) Hindu Dharm Niti. (4) Brahm Dharm.
- (5) Jagatar Balya Ithas (translation of an English book, "Childhood of the world").

The last book appealed to him the most. Once the love for seeking true knowledge grew in Bhagwan, it dominated him and became an unconquerable psychic motive force in him. It made him a thorough-going and progressive seeker of all such knowledge as led him to truth. He remained a profound student all his life.

CHAPTER III.

Growth of the love for assimilating the Truth.

To seek true knowledge is one thing and to assimilate and accept it even when it demolishes one's own dearly cherished and treasured beliefs and practices is quite different. There are persons who are anxious and determined to keep to their own pet theories and beliefs, and study Science and Literature, not with the object of finding out how far their theories and beliefs can stand the search light of truth, but they gather only such knowledge as can support their views. These persons can seek knowledge and gain reputation for great learning but they can never be called lovers of truth.

Hence along with the blessed psychic force of seeking and acquiring true knowledge which made Bhagwan an humble but profound student of all such literature as shed light on social, political and religious problems, he developed a very powerful psychic force of assimilating and accepting the truth at any cost. With the growth of this unique trait of higher life his one, all absorbing and dominating desire was

not only to correctly and sincerely describe to others his own beliefs, opinions and ideas and face any trouble which his frank avowal may create for him, but to reflect on his own cherished beliefs and professions and bring them under the searching criticism of reason and truth and to reject all that his own light and sound criticism may show him to be false or mythical and to assimilate and accept only that which may prove to be true. *To sit on judgment on one's own dearly loved theories and accepted doctrines with a mind detached from all bias* and to keep an open mind for the light of truth to enter when it threatens to demolish them, *speaks of an extraordinary elevated mind* wonderfully tuned to truth as life's true destination and most beneficial ideal.

The one constant prayer of Bhagwan Dev Atma's heart when this unique psychic force of assimilating truth grew and developed in him was the one which we would better express in his own blessed words from his Hindi Autobiography Part I:—

“May my capacity to apprehend the truth grow and flourish in me. May I be able to know truth and accept it. May the

capacity to see and discriminate untruth and also to totally abjure it develop more and more in me. May each one of my beliefs be consistent with truth and none of them have any shadow of untruth."

Bhagwan's capacity for assimilating and accepting the truth waxed strong in him. This was but natural. He was dominated by this singular love. His one deep and silent prayer as said above was for homage of his heart to truth and nothing but truth. The one great factor of progress in any line is to possess a corresponding irrepressible feeling for it. Such a feeling always makes the life of one dominated by it quite uncomfortable, so long as he does not make every possible effort to gratify it and to crush down all obstacles. Passion for gambling has led gamblers to stake even wife and kingdom. Such is the drama enacted by every masterful love—high or low. Those who have ever observed and studied the nature of masterful low loves or any higher love, can by a stretch of imagination understand what a masterful love for accepting truth can demand from a soul which it dominates.

Within a short time, therefore, a vast change was effected in Bhagwan's beliefs and professions.

When he came to Lahore he was a devout Vedantist. He had given up faith in various gods and goddesses and all belief in idol-worship. He treasured in his heart the belief in one God, as the Creator of all this phenomenal world. Before leaving Roorkee he had abjured all those numberless unmeaning or evil rites and usages which owed their birth to the manufactory of the priestly brain and which were the current creeds of people for centuries past.

But the awakening in him of the higher psychic forces of love for seeking truth and love for accepting and assimilating it caused a great revolution in his beliefs. He came to believe:—

1. That the Being who is called the Creator of this Universe and Omniscient and all-good is alone the one unique personality or Brahm or God.

2. That he personally was not a Brahm nor was any other person, plant or animal, Brahm or God.

3. That Brahm never incarnated as man or animal. The belief in the incarnation of God was false.

4. That God never holds a court or Darbar like a human King or Emperor on any special or appointed day. The belief in the day of judgment was a huge myth

5. That God does not listen to recommendation or intercession. He does not take revenge. The belief in any prophet etc., being a mediator between man and God was a false belief.

6. That God has revealed no book beyond and apart from the Book of Nature. All books are man-made.

7. That Vedantic philosophy was untrue and deceptive.

8. That none gets or can get salvation from sins by a dip in any river or any waters or by taking a sip out of them.

9. That none gets or can get salvation from sins by visiting a place of pilgrimage and having an ocular vision of any idol kept there or by residing in that place.

10. That good and evil deeds bear their natural fruit. But the theory of transmigration propounded by Hindus according to which we reap in the present life fruits of deeds committed by us in previous births is a huge myth.

11. That many distinctions that prevail in Hindu society regarding food, marriage, profession etc. are false and most harmful.

12. That the custom of infant marriage or child marriage is a most pernicious custom.

13. That as the remarriage of a widower is not improper in all circumstances, so a widow remarriage is also not wrong under all circumstances. In many cases remarriages by widows and widowers are proper and beneficial for both.

14. That both men and women possess equal rights to have equal opportunities for intellectual advancement and progress in soul life.

15. That many of the social rites and customs prevalent in society are false and harmful, &c., &c.

Thus Bhagwan underwent a tremendous change in his beliefs and opinions and gave

up several false usages, customs, rites and ceremonies which were believed in as true and followed by millions of his own countrymen and others. But his belief in one God which he had imbibed in his childhood not only remained with him as a true and living faith and no doubts arose in his mind about it, but it was strengthened and deepened in the environments in which he breathed.

CHAPTER IV.

Love for proving true in all right engagements.

Within a few short months Bhagwan rose like a star on the firmament of public life in the Punjab. All eyes were turned to him as the coming man. His singular life made a deep impression on others. The one thing that was eminently striking in his character was the unbroken fidelity in every day life to his beliefs and professions and proclivities. His inside life and outside behaviour were never at variance. If he gave up any belief his entire life illustrated that. If he set his back against any usage, he never compromised with that under any circumstances and was all along undismayed by any fear of opposition or persecution or even the dread of ex-communication or any worldly loss or harm.

Besides this another singular fact that began to strike those that came in contact with him was his absolute fidelity to all public or private engagements. The love of truth that was unfolding in him in various

phases and the love of goodness that had already grown into a mighty motive force of his conduct made it utterly impossible for him to break any right engagement; as the breach of every right engagement was not only calculated to make him false—a position which he abhorred—but to produce evil at which his entire being tremendously revolted. Says Bhagwan Dev Atma in part first of his Hindu Autobiography:—

“The fifth constituent of the love of truth which evolved in me was *Satya Priligya Palan Anurag* (i.e. love for fulfilling all right engagements). This love made it imperative on me to abide by all such engagements or promises, which I undertook to perform in relation to various persons as long as I was not convinced of their being wrong or sinful, and never let any other thing to stand in the way. Besides this it also became imperative on me to be true to time engagements, i.e. if I undertook to do any thing for any person within a specified time or if it was expected of me to do a certain thing within a certain fixed time, I

should not only do that work but do it within time. Suppose I have promised to see Rama at 3 p. m. on any appointed day or am expected to attend any meeting at 7 p. m. for which one Sham has given me due notice and at which my attendance is proper and necessary, I would not only see Rama and attend the meeting but do so before the *appointed time*, unless and until it became impossible for me to do so on account of some great mishap. Both these forces (*i.e.* sticking to right engagements and fulfilling them in right time) regulated my conduct completely. I have always remained true to all right engagements. Whenever I have in my daily life, entered, into any engagement with any of my own family members, or any member of my society or any other person from amongst the public and whenever I have undertaken to do any job, I have not only stood by my promises, but have fulfilled my engagements and promises within time and done them to a finish. If I had to see any person at 3 p.m. and to attend any meeting at 7 p.m., if I had to make any payment of money on Tuesday and send a reply to a letter of any person on Wednesday, I always took 3 p.m.

for 3 p.m., and 7 p.m. for 7 p.m., and Tuesday and Wednesday as Tuesday and Wednesday. I could never consider 3 p.m. as indetical to 3-15 p.m. or 3-30 p.m. or 4 p.m. and Tuesday as good as Saturday. I have never been able to understand the arithmetic of thousands of my own countrymen which they call Indian time, and equate 4 p.m. to 4-15 p.m., 4-30 p.m. or even 5 p.m. I have all along endeavoured my absolute best to be true to time and complete my engagements and promises within the time and on the appointed day. No consideration of bodily comfort, happiness or any other such temptation, no desire force, no propensity, no voice of self and no thought of any other thing has ever succeeded in influencing me to prove false to my time engagements and other promises.

“Nay even when I have *undertaken* in my own mind to finish any work which is personal to me within any fixed period, I have put in all my might to complete that within that time.”

Bhagwan Dev Atma held thousands of public and private meetings for the propagation of his life mission, and visited and

visited by any number of persons in his life. There is not a single case when it could be said that Bhagwan proved untrue to his promise or was late even on a single occasion. Such a fidelity to all promises and all time engagements is absolutely a unique phenomenon in human world and hardly met with in our land. There is not a single political leader of even the greatest eminence in our land about whom it may be said that he observes complete fidelity to time engagements. We had had ourselves the bitterest experience of how it has become a practice for the great leaders to break time engagements. Almost on all occasions they are late even when they are to preside or are the main speakers at any public meeting. It is a rare sight for any of them to have even the courtesy to express any regret for their late coming. Some of them even defend their indefensible position by a hoax that they are very busy people and the public should thank them that they are at least able to come there. This only reveals the utter absence of any love for keeping all right engagements.

The absence of this essential force has made breach of the solemn promises by man in relation to man as a matter of course. The tailor makes spacious promises which he knows he will not fulfil. The washerman does the same. The black-smith, the iron-smith, the gold-smith, the carpenter, the cooly, the clerk in an office, the shop-keeper—almost all—daily indulge in the breach of the most solemn pledges. Not to say of verbal promises, there are thousands and hundreds of thousands who deny execution of even written, registered, duly sealed and witnessed documents. Even great statesmen and rulers of vast kingdoms treat their solemn written pledges as a “scrap of paper” worthy of waste paper basket. With not so much as a second thought they cast them to winds or at most put absolutely forced and distorted interpretation on them, in order to make a show of fulfilling the letter and killing the spirit of their engagements. Alas! what an utter callousness prevails in this respect and and what a scant courtesy is displayed by general mart towards plighted verbal or written word.

“It has sometimes happened,” says Bhagwan Dev Atma, “that I have needed the help and co-operation of others in completing some work within a specified time. But when I have seen such person or persons trying by their habits of procrastination under the influence of any lower feeling, to thwart me or make it difficult for me to abide by my promise and fulfil it within time, I have felt simply tortured and my blood has literally boiled in my veins. My entire being has felt a supreme anxiety to be true to my engagement, while these persons by their ignoble conduct have wished to betray me from the path of truth.....But I have never given these low persons the satisfaction of leading me astray and by the power of my love for truth, have all along proved true to my word”.

“They alone can form some estimate of what it has cost me on such occasions to keep faithful to my right engagements, who have been living with or near me. They know how at times I had to put forth phenomenal effort not only to crush down the lethargy or obstructions raised against my abiding by my right promises by the so-

called helpers but also to overcome other unforeseen obstacles and adverse circumstances''.

How many in the past and how many in the present can be honestly said to have never broken a time engagement or any right engagement in relation to any person, nay even those made with themselves. Such a thorough going or complete fidelity could be a characteristic of none in the world but a Dev Atma.

May we humbly seek for the light which may show us the resplendent glory of this unique character force and bend our heart in adoration to the possessor of it.



CHAPTER V.

Love for the Propagation of Truth.

To assimilate truth is one thing and to propagate it is another. To assimilate truth demands one higher psychic force but to propagate it requires quite a different psychic power. It is not necessary that one who accumulates wealth, may also give it away in charity. It is not necessary that the collector of rare books or rare curiosities may feel a strong desire to throw both open for the good of mankind. Similarly to assimilate truth is not tantamount to a strong feeling to propagate it. If both these psychic forces had been identical and not different, we would have had as many missionaries as we have disciples of any great mind. There are hundreds and thousands of students who graduate in one or the other branch of scientific knowledge. And yet we hardly come across even one per cent. disseminating the truths assimilated by them. There have been examples of hundreds of

Indian physicians who discovered some great specifics for one or the other disease which were very efficacious and yet instead of propagating them for the good of the world they carried them to their grave.

In social, moral, political and so-called soul-welfare societies, we find the same thing. There are thousands among our countrymen who have been sufficiently enlightened to realize that several social customs rampant in Hindu society (*viz.*, caste system, enforced widowhood, extravagant expenses, untouchability, etc.) are utterly wrong and most pernicious. And yet how many among them use their pen and tongue to propagate their views. Bhagwan Dev Atma has flooded this our planet with most precious gems of truths of unique importance for every man and there are hundreds if not thousands who have at one time or another or for all life realized their beauty, glory and absolute usefulness for mankind, and yet how many propagate them by pen and word of mouth? Very few. This is the case in all the various branches of human knowledge.

Bhagwan Dev Atma not only evolved the most unique force of assimilating the

truth at any cost, but he quickly developed the unique psychic force of propagating it. Says Bhagwan Dev Atma:—

“When with the growth of reflection, critical judgment and power of logical reasoning and by study, a remarkable change took place in my beliefs and professions, and my heart, realizing the fascinating beauty of truth, felt a great impulse to express its glory and to raise a voice of strongest protest against untruth, I developed the sixth constituent of love of truth *i.e.* love for propagating it. The altruistic forces of sympathy for others and unselfish service of them had already blossomed in my soul. Hence when I witnessed all around thousands and lacs of human beings entangled in the meshes of false beliefs, false dogmas, false creeds and evil social customs, usages and ceremonies my heart was deeply stirred, and I felt an irrepressible feeling to carry to them as much light of truth as I had been able myself to get. Motived by these feelings I started in June 1875 two journals, one in Hindi and another in Urdu. Besides writing in their columns, I started propagating truth by holding public or congrega-

tional meetings. It was in that very year that I delivered my maiden speech in "Sat-Sabha", inside Lohari Gate, in which I, in corroboration of my speech, read many quotations from the Hindu Shastras. It was perhaps in the same year that I became a member of the Brahmo Samaj. By being appointed its minister also, I began holding prayers meetings and delivering sermons in the Brahmo Mandir. Gradually my scope for these activities widened and I delivered sermons and lectures from other platforms and in other stations."

"The first book named '*Sattya Mahma Pradarshak*,' that I wrote and published, was in glory of truth. In this book I had supported my theme by copious collection of quotations from Hindu scriptures which directly related to the glory of truth".

Some of these quotations are given below as specimen:—

“सत्यमेव जयते नाऽनृतम् ।”

TRANSLATION:— Truth alone triumphs and not falsehood.

“योऽन्यथा सन्तमात्मानमन्यथ प्रतिपद्यते;”

कितेन न कृतं पापं चौरैणात्मापहारिण ।”

(महाभारत । आदि ७४ । ३०१४ ।)

TRANSLATION:—What is there in the world which cannot be committed by such a soul-robbing thief who tries to show himself before others what he in fact is not (*i.e.* a hypocrite).

नास्ति सत्यसमो धर्मो, न सत्याद्विद्यत परम् ;
नहि तीव्रतरं किञ्चिद् नृतादिह विद्यते ।
(म० । आदि । ७४ । ३०६७ ।)

TRANSLATION:—There is no religion higher than truth, hence there is nothing superior to truth. In this world there is nothing more dreadful or horrible than falsehood.

सत्ये कृत्वा प्रतिष्ठान्तु, प्रवर्तन्ते प्रवृत्तयः ;
सत्यमेव गरीयस्तु, शिष्टाचार निषेवितः
(म० । वन० । २०६ । १३७५७ ।)

TRANSLATION:—It is the duty of man to regulate all his desire forces on the basis of truth, because truth is the noblest object with all civilized and higher people.

आत्मज्ञानं परं ज्ञानम्, सत्यवृत्तं परं व्रतम् ;
सत्यस्य वचनं श्रेयः सत्ये ज्ञाने हितं भवेत् ।
यद्भूत हितमत्यन्तं, तद्वै सत्यं परं मतम् ।
(म० । वन० । २५८ । १३९८० ।)

TRANSLATION:—Soul-knowledge is Supreme knowledge; Vow of Truth is Supreme

Vow, Truth speaking is good, thus true knowledge alone is beneficial. All such supreme truth is worth knowing, which is calculated to do highest good to all living beings.

सत्यं ब्रह्म तपः सत्यं, सत्यं विसृजते प्रजाः,
सत्येन धार्यते लोकाः, स्वर्गं सत्येन गच्छति।
(म० । शा० । १६० । ६६६८ ।)

TRANSLATION:—Truth alone is Brahm or God; Truth alone is *Tapasia* or Asceticism; Truth alone is the maker of all living beings. All worlds are based on truth. Hence by truth alone man enters the Paradise.

तस्मात्सत्यं व्रताचारः, सत्ययोग परायणः ;
सत्यकामः समोदान्तः, सत्येनैवान्तकं जयेत्।
(म० । शा० । १७४ । ६६५५१ ।)

TRANSLATION:—Therefore act always in consonance with Truth; Develop ability to follow Truth; By true deeds, impartiality, and conquest of lower passions conquer death by truth alone.

न हि सत्यात्परो धर्मो, न पापमनुताम्परम् ;
तस्मात्सर्वार्थानां मर्त्यैः सत्यमेकं समाधयेत्।

सत्यहीना वृथा पूजा, सत्यहीनो वृथा जपः;
सत्यहीन तपो व्यर्थं, मूषरे वपनं यथा ।

× × × ×

सत्यमूढाः क्रियाः सर्वाः सत्यात्परवरं न हि ।

(महानिघार्यं तन्त्रम् । ४७० । ३ ।)

TRANSLATION:— There is no religion higher than truth, there is no sin worse than Untruth, therefore with singleness of heart find shelter in Truth. All worship is vain, all *Jap* (repeating mantars or names) is vain without truth and all religious penances void of truth are useless like sowing seed in barren land. Nothing is higher than Truth and true deeds.

सत्यमेव व्रतं यस्य, दया दीनेषु सर्वदा ;

कामक्रोधौ वशौ यस्य, तेन लोकत्रयं जितम् ।

(महानि० । ८ । ६७ ।)

TRANSLATION:— He has conquered all the three worlds who is wedded to nothing but Truth, has mercy for the poor, and control over lust and anger.

Besides these quotations from Hindu religious scriptures which Bhagwan selected in praise of truth which he loved, he had himself composed certain mottos which he had published in his journal "Biradar-i-Hind"

in bold type in glory of truth. We give here one or two of these:—

“रास्ती को ढूँढो, रास्ती को प्यार करो, रास्ती की तकलीद करो, रास्ती को अमल में लाओ।”

(जनवरी सन १८७६ के सरवरक पर)

TRANSLATION:— Seek truth, love truth, follow truth, practise truth.

(Title page for January, 1879).

“सिदाकत की हि फ़तह है, झूठ की नहीं।

सिदाकत को ढूँढो, सिदाकत को प्यार करो,
सिदाकत की तकलीद करो सिदाकत को अमल
में लाओ।”

(जुलाई १८८० के सरवरक पर)

TRANSLATION:— Truth alone triumphs and not falsehood. Hence seek truth, love truth, follow truth and practise truth. (Title-Page for July, 1880).

Thus both by pen and word of mouth, Bhagwan threw himself heart and soul in propagating truth. As he was the sincerest lover of truth and his life accorded with his preachings, the cause of truth substantially gained by his advocacy. As his words—spoken or written—issued from heart charged with power, his audience used to feel inspired after they had heard him. Similarly his

readers used to feel the living power of his writings.

Bhagwan continued his Hindi journal for 19 months and had to stop it for want of subscribers. But his Urdu journal "Biradar-i-Hind" continued for seven years. He started these journals not with any object of pecuniary gain. He conducted them for the public good from his own private funds. After this Urdu journal, Bhagwan started a new paper called "Dharm Jiwan" which by and by developed into a weekly and continued for ten years. He also edited the "Reformer" for some time and "Qaumi Akhbar" for one year. After "Dharm Jiwan," Bhagwan started "Jiwan Path," a Hindi journal of unique importance which lasted for 8 years. Thereafter Bhagwan contributed any number of articles in the Urdu paper and Hindi journal of his own society called "Jiwan Tatva" and "Sewak".

He did not confine his activities to merely editing journals. He was a voluminous writer. He wrote and compiled nearly 300 volumes and continued this work almost up to the last illness which led to his physical death.

Thus by publishing thousands of copies of not only these hundreds of books but of free pamphlets, and writing countless articles and conducting numberless congregational and public meetings, Bhagwan propagated truth for more than half a century with that zeal, that absolute devotion, that masterful vigour, that phenomenal energy and singleness of purpose, that utter self-abnegation which amazed and astonished not a few of his contemporaries, his friends and even his opponents, and caused not a little terror in the camps of those who had built their societies on hypocrisy and their religion on fraud and falsehood, while it liberated the minds of hundreds and thousands from falsehood and soul-darkness and produced a public opinion for independence of thought in all lines which is the greatest contribution of Bhagwan to the public life of the Panjab and other provinces.

CHAPTER VI.

Love for espousing the Truth loyally under all circumstances and at all costs.

To propagate truth which is pleasant, which accords with the public temper, which is popular or which is the rage of the times, which follows the line of least resistance and thus demands no sacrifice, may fall to the lot of several persons. There are and have been social reformers, political propagandists and public men of various shades and grades, who have at one or the other time caught a glimpse of some truth, appreciated it and even zealously advocated it from the public platform. Some of them have even served its cause by vigorous pen. Some have gone still further. By leading a magnificent agitation, they have moved the Legislature to pass an Act in defence of their truth. But when the occasion has risen which demanded from them the last price of a real devotee *i. e.* practising it in their own life,

they have failed. They have thus shown their weak spot. They have thereby betrayed truth. If the facts were collected, it would be found that more harm has been done to the cause of reform, progress and truth by those who publicly propagated it, than by those who were either lukewarm or even its open enemies, because these public protagonists betrayed themselves and thus brought the cause of truth into ridicule. Distinguished men like Justice Ranade of Bombay and Poona, Babu Keshab Chander Sen of Calcutta, Dewan Dayaram Gidumal of Sindh and several other notable persons gave a set-back (which for long long times it would be difficult to recover) to the cause of truths they publicly espoused, because in an hour of weakness they deviated from those truths and have left an example of life which hardly redounds to the glory of that truth. Fall of a great personality is viewed with pain because it is not a fall of single person but of a cause.

We cannot therefore call him a lover of truth who zealously propagates either a popular truth or a truth which at the hour of trial he deserts. We cannot even call him

threatens to demolish his cherished opinions, beliefs and modes of conduct. He alone deserves to be called a lover of truth who, besides accepting truth irrespective of any consideration—whether it accords with his acquired beliefs and modes of conduct or conflicts with them, whether it is truth of one's own land or of foreign import, whether it is popular or unpopular—is prepared to stand by it, at all costs, and allows no temptation of any kind to lead him astray from its flag, and who never deserts it whatever the risk. This courage to uphold the banner of truth, in the teeth of world opposition and with absolute fidelity to stand by it amidst all forms of dangers, risks and temptations, is a necessary constituent of the love of truth.

As Bhagwan Dev Atma was lover of truth, he also developed that constituent of love of truth which is called *Satya Samarthan Anurag*. About the evolution of this trait in him, Bhagwan says :—

“It became imperative on me to uphold any truth, which I knew as truth, by every one of my acts in my daily life *i. e.* on the one hand, to refrain absolutely from associating myself with any religious belief, which I

knew to be false, any social custom, usage or rite which I came to know as opposed to truth, any form of daily manners which I believed to be void of truth and any kind of conduct in daily life which I found to be untrue; and on the other hand, to always associate myself fully with any truth, that I found, to be truth, in my own or any other nation's religion, traditions, beliefs, practices, rites, usages or general behaviour, and to stand by it. In short my inner thoughts and beliefs and my external behaviour may be in absolute unison and that I should desert no truth that I knew as such, either under the temptation of bodily comfort, wealth, fame, name, etc. or through the fear of any of my family members, or community or society or the fear of calumny and slander at the hands of others and thus remain true and maintain utter fidelity to truth."

Such a form of devotion to truth had to take its own toll. Persons wedded to falsehood and those captivated by the policy of hypocrisy scented a danger in this unique lover of truth. Bhagwan rightly remarks further on in this respect :—

“A person who upholds, by every act of his daily life, every form of truth, and who definitely and emphatically disassociates himself from all kinds of false beliefs, rites, usages, ceremonies, etc., which he finds rampant in the world, has not only to be completely clean of all forms of insincerity or hypocrisy, but has to face the natural consequences of being a target of hatred, slander and abuse to all those thousands of persons who are devoid of this love and are enslaved to hypocrisy and other low forces. Again such persons could hardly tolerate me, who based the very system of their so-called religious faith and the policy of working it on rank hypocrisy, who laid down the propagation of their creed as a means to the earthly end of gaining worldly things and political power, and who, being utterly blind to the good side of the life of foreigners, considered their “progress” and the fulfilment of their object to lie in harming, by their various sinful deeds, such foreigners and such of their country men who held faiths other than theirs. The extent to which such persons could look upon me with feelings of deep hatred and revenge and put forth indescrib-

able efforts to persecute me and subject me to any amount of suffering can well be imagined.”

“Being possessed by the love to stand by truth implicitly, I felt impelled, by the very necessity of my being, not only to uphold every good quality that I could find in my own people, but also to associate myself with every noble trait that I found in the people of other races and countries. It had also become imperative for me to expose all such falsehood as I found in the religious beliefs &c. of not only my own caste or countrymen but also in those of the people of other creeds and other countries. But those, who had built the very superstructure of their faith on hypocrisy and falsehood, and had made it an article of faith, for the progress of their so-called religion, to demolish the religious edifices of others—specially of the creeds of nations or people of other lands—even by preaching falsehood, could not bear that I should expose them in their true colours, and criticise their dreadful policy of falsehood and hypocrisy and uphold the noble national traits of foreigners. They therefore became my inveterate foes. But as it was natural

for these persons, in such condition of their heart, to become my enemies, it was also absolutely natural for me—being possessed of this unique love of upholding every truth—to stand by truth so far as it had dawned upon me, irrespective of any consideration of my own nation or country or of any other land or creed and similarly to criticise and expose every untruth as untruth wherever found”.

This unique psychic force made Bhagwan an absolutely fearless apostle of truth and uncompromising enemy of untruth. His entire public life, covering a period of over half a century, is replete with grand and illustrative instances of his undaunted advocacy of truth however unpopular, and of his readiness to suffer any trouble, risk, harm or to undergo any form of sacrifice in the service of truth and in exposing untruth and falsehood. We confine ourselves here to one example of his unique life which would serve to illustrate the extent of his this love force.

Bhagwan had joined Brahmo Samaj in the year 1875. He worked as its minister and was ordained as its honorary missionary. During his life as a Brahmo, a committee

was appointed, at the instance of the Managing Committee of Sadharan Brahmo Samaj of Calcutta, to investigate and make a thorough enquiry into a charge that was laid on a distinguished minister of Brahm Samaj Pandit Vijay Krishan Goswami that he entertained some beliefs antagonistic to the beliefs of Brahmo Samaj. This committee finished the enquiry and submitted its report to the said Managing committee. The committee took exception to certain beliefs of the Goswami which it said were objectional and disqualified the Goswami from holding any longer the position of a missionary of Sadharan Brahmo Samaj. This report was published in the Bengali organ of the Samaj "Tatwa Komadi" of Calcutta. Bhagwan read that report. He found that some of the beliefs, entertained by the Goswami, which had brought about his dismissal, were such as he himself believed to be correct. Now it was impossible for Bhagwan to keep silent. At once Bhagwan wrote a letter to the Goswami in which he upheld, in strongest possible terms, those beliefs which he considered then to be true. He further

wrote that if he (the Goswami) was disqualified from being a missionary of the S. Brahmo Samaj because of those beliefs, he (the Bhagwan) too stood in the same category and he could not understand how he would be considered qualified, in view of those beliefs, to be retained as missionary of the S. Brahmo Samaj. Bhagwan sent a copy of this letter to the Managing Committee of the S. B. Samaj also. It is indeed curious that the managing committee, even after the receipt of copy of Bhagwan's letter, kept silent and took no action.

Throughout his life this unique trait was the most prominent motive force of his public career.



CHAPTER VII.



Love for investigation into truths relating to the true Dharma.



The crowning constituent of love of Truth, which blossomed in the unique heart of Bhagwan Dev Atma, and which was as glorious in its nature as it was pregnant with utmost possibilities for him and for the world, was the love for investigating into truths relating to the true Religion or the science of soul. This love started naturally the questions of why and wherefore in matters of religion. It imperiously demanded of him to take all his religious beliefs into the laboratory of truth; analyse each and every one of them piece meal, bring to bear on them an absolutely unbiased and detached mind, to apply the search light of right criticism, merciless logic and thorough sifting. It became imperative on him to reject every such belief which turned out to be inconsistent with or antagonistic to facts and truths, however dear and precious that belief may have been to him and others.

This phase of the love of truth requires complete freedom from the frequently advocated bondage of soul called blind or unquestioned faith in matters religious. Bhagwan's unique heart was utterly liberated from the bonds of blind faith. "I was not ready," writes Bhagwan Dev Atma, "to accept anything under any conditions on the basis merely of faith. Nothing was acceptable to me as truth merely because it was found in or supported by ancient or modern sacred scriptures or because it was accepted as truth by this or that sage of yore or of recent times. *I could accept any belief as true only when it proved to be true.* I knew as a matter of fact that as in the olden days untruth was widely propagated—consciously or unconsciously—by all those so-called sages and seers, *rishies* and *munies*, prophets and preceptors and various exponents of various so-called religions who were void of the love of truth; similarly in the modern times various advocates and apostles of the so-called religious faiths, preached and propagated as truth, various kinds of falsehoods—even such falsehoods, as were on their very face clear as false

coin, and which they did or could clearly see as such in the every day experience of their life. They dared to propagate those clear untruths, either under the delusion of blind faith or in order to subserve their cherished policy of utter hypocrisy, with the object of gaining wealth, fame, name, worldly happiness or such other objects. As I, on the one hand, could not accept anything as true on the basis of mere belief and, on the other, was possessed of the strongest appetite for truth, I naturally evolved in my soul love for investigating truth in the world of soul or *Dharma*. This love necessarily kept me absorbed in the supreme work of research in this connection."

This love was as glorious and valuable as it was fraught with great difficulties and vast struggles. The gradual unfolding of this unique force, and its growing sway over his being, kept Bhagwan deeply absorbed in the investigation of the most subtle and difficult truths continuously for years. Times out of number, he had to face overwhelming difficulties and disappointments, and the mental anguish of a lonely traveller on an untrodden

path of journey, who is feverishly intent on reaching the end of his journey, and who is bereft even of that much consolation which a soul gets for his efforts, *i. e.*, a single word of appreciation from any human soul. The story of what a heavy toll this single unique force of his life took from Bhagwan is not without its pathos and its unique significance and it would be mentioned in some detail further on.



CHAPTER VIII.

The evolution in Bhagwan of true and complete *veragya* (renunciation).

Side by side with the evolution of various constituents of love of truth already mentioned, Bhagwan developed in his unique soul corresponding psychic forces of repulsion for untruth. They were the following eight forces:—

1. Complete repulsion for all forms of speaking untruth.
2. Complete repulsion for false or untrue vows or promises.
3. Complete repulsion for accepting and assimilating any untruth.
4. Complete repulsion for standing by or following an untruth.
5. Complete repulsion for hypocrisy or insincerity.
6. Complete repulsion for darkness born of untruth.
7. Complete repulsion for all forms of happiness obtainable by untruth.

8. Complete repulsion for all forms of gains derivable by untruth.

These *Veragya* forces became as strong in Bhagwan's soul as grew the various forces of love of truth.

But what is meant by *Veragya* or renunciation? *Veragya* means in fact repulsion for whatever is against any dominating love. What is meant by *true Veragya*? The *true Veragya* consists in the evolution in one's heart of complete hatred for every such thought and every such deed, which harms one's soul-life, and on account of which one endeavours to refrain from every one of them. This kind of *Veragya* does not blossom in every soul. It is born only in such a soul who is possessed of complete love for truth and complete love for goodness. Hence the possibility of the evolution of complete *Veragya* should be expected only in that unique soul who brings in the world a unique heredity of the highest psychic forces of the love for truth and the love for goodness.

The world is quite familiar with the word *Veragya*? But the nature of *Veragya* which the world has accepted and followed

for centuries past, is either wholly wrong and based on untruth or, if at all it is true, it is quite partial. The kind of *Veragya* that has prevailed in India is, almost all, based on untruth and is hence very harmful. There are at present nearly 75 lacs of persons or more who are called Sadhus or souls who have renounced the world. They are believed to be possessed of *Veragya*. But look at them and their nature and what do we find? There are lacs among them, who have adopted yellow dress, as a means to earn their livelihood by sheer begging. Begging is their accepted profession. There are thousands among them, who have taken to yellow dress because they lost all family members, had no property to call their own, nor any respect in their *bira-dri* and who chose to pass their lives on the charity of others and engage themselves for some times in reading some so-called sacred scripture or in imaginary religious exercises. Such are the persons about whom a very significant saying runs thus:—

‘नार मरी घर समपद नासी, मूढ मुंडाय भय
सनयासी।’

(With the death of wife and loss of wealth and property, he got himself clean shaven and accepted *Sannyas*).

There are again those who have, at one or the other time of their life, committed some crime and who have plunged into the ocean of these homeless Sadhus to escape detection at the hands of the police. There are some cheats, who have adopted the dress of a Sadhu, to practise frauds on those credulous minds, who enshrine deepest reverence for the class of so-called Sadhus. There are some, who have succeeded in securing *mahantship* of some famous *math* or temple and thus become the proprietors of vast lands or *jagirs* attached to these religious places. There are still lacs, who have given up all home ties and other worldly duties and responsibilities, because they have been taught to believe and realize that man has to face any amount of worries and miseries because of domestic entanglements, and that by abandoning them he becomes a free bird, goes where he pleases, untrammelled and unrestricted. gets a chance to roam about the whole world in company of Sadhus and can thus get much more happi-

ness. There are others again who have snapped all home and other ties in search for imaginary happiness, which, they are taught, can be had by the worship of Rama, Krishna, Vishnu or Shiva and thus one can get into heaven, *Vaikunth*, *Golak*, *Shivlok* etc., after his death and float in the waters of absolute felicity there. There are again those who have entered this class in order to get those fabulous powers which the ingenuity of man has associated with the practice of *yogya*. So on and so forth.

These so-called Sadhus not only grope in utter darkness, because, they are void of the true knowledge of the life of soul, but they even grow more degraded; for by renouncing their domestic ties their own desires have not vanished. They are grooded by their own imperious desire forces to seek their gratification and this they do by unnatural or improper ways. Several among them use intoxicants. A very large number among them commits one or many of the gross sins and vices such as unnatural offences,

adultery, theft, cheating, hypocrisy, idleness etc., etc., and thereby do incalculable harm not only to themselves but to their countrymen and others. Such persons, wearing the garb of a Sadhu, and passing for a Sanyasi or ascetic, prove a menace to the soul-life of thousands of persons. Millions among the followers of various false faiths, not only fail to treat them, as they deserve, with supreme contempt, but show unusual zeal in ministering to their various needs and serving them with money and with body and soul and thereby contribute to their greater degradation by enlarging their scope of mischief.

Rarely one would come across, in this ocean of so-called *Veragies* or *Sadhu's* one in a thousand, who can be credited with possessing even ordinary character, and who deserves to be respected for any noble feeling or act. But even this fragment of mankind in this class, which possesses ordinary character and commands esteem for any noble feeling, should be considered true *Veragies* only to the extent that they possess any repulsion for any evil thought and act or, being above the low love of fame and name, engage, with

unselfish motive, in any work of public good. But how many among these 75 lacs of Sahdus or more, can we count as men of even ordinary good moral life and devoted to any useful or serviceable work? If this vast mass of people, doing no honest work at all, for their own maintenance, and depending for all their bodily needs upon others, had been possessed of even rudimentary feelings of unselfish service of others, they would have revolutionised the Indian world and proved real asset to this country; but alas! they prove now a dead weight on our unfortunate land.

In Europe and America we find thousands, who have risen above selfishness in one or the other line, and have devoted their energies to one or other department of service of others. These persons possess in truth some true *Veragya*. They wear coats. They wear boots. They wear collars. They live in very neat and tidy homes. They live a civilized life. And yet they do possess true but partial *Veragya*, when and to the extent they contribute their energies in the unselfish service of others. In our own land too all such persons

who apply their energies, their wealth, their possessions, their time and powers in the service and well-being of others, can be called true but partial *Veragies*. But they are all devoid of the various highest psychic forces of love for truth and goodness, and hence they are devoid also of true and real feelings of *Veragya* which spring up from these highest psychic forces. And though they are possessed of some feeling of unselfish service in one or the other line, yet they cherish evil thoughts against others, commit various sinful acts, and propagate lies against any truly noble and revered soul under the dominant sway of various low biases for their own respective creeds, personal predilections, cherished beliefs, traditions, etc., and under the warping influence of jealousy, vindictiveness, false ego etc. Such persons outrage truth and countenance untruth. They prove most harmful to man and to sub-human kingdoms.

Our land not only, to a very large measure, suffers from the lack of even those true partial *Veragies* but there are scarcely any persons even among its cultured class

who possess an eye for the appreciation of such true partial *Veragies*. This is extremely deplorable. *Nations become higher according as they possess greater number of persons who possess higher psychic forces, who devote their energies, their time, their powers and their possessions in the unselfish service of others.*

Let it be borne in mind that love and hate go together. A soul who possesses love for anything is bound to hate its opposite. Hence when the various highest and most blessed psychic forces of love for Truth and Goodness evolved in Bhagwan, the corresponding mightiest forces of repulsion for untruth and wrong also grew in him side by side.

These singular powers distinguished Bhagwan from all those who were void of them in one thousand and one ways. Those void of them began to feel Bhagwan as somebody who was a stranger to them and who was incomprehensible. It is but a law of mind that those who do not possess any particular feeling are by their very being unfitted to understand and sympathise with

one possessed of it. This is why Bhagwan felt himself unknown, ignored and even hated by those for whose highest service he was working day and night.



CHAPTER IX.

The unique psychic forces of Bhagwan Dev Atma and their unique drama.

The evolution of the various constituents of the love of truth and the corresponding forces of hatred for various forms of untruth, combined with wonderful forces of love for goodness and hatred for all that is evil, opened those worlds of life and activity for Bhagwan which were a sealed book to mankind. He saw what others could not see. He felt^t what others could not feel. His hungers and thirsts of soul were quite unique. He was caught up by the most overwhelming thirst for the evolution of his own *inner* life forces and building of the *inner* lives of others. This was the one ambition of his life. This was the one dream and one passion of his heart. Says Bhagwan:—

“At the age of nearly 23 years I came to Lahore. Here I used to spend all my available time, save few hours of my duties in the school, in study and contemplation, writing on serious subjects, delivering lectures and doing

lot of other work conducive to the welfare of others. I had a very limited circle of those with whom I associated. With all others of whatever grade or position in life, I established no direct connection of any kind. Even in that limited circle of acquaintances, I had close intimacy with hardly one or two persons. I was possessed of a singular mould of mind which had nothing in common with those around me. As there was no psychic kinship or relationship with them hence there was no *heart's union* with them."

But this does not mean that Bhagwan believed in the hoary ideal of asceticism, in the gospel of cutting off all ties from the world. Says Bhagwan:—

"Living in the midst of humanity I did realize my relationship with man. But it was the lower life of general man, his evil and sinful tendencies and courses of general behaviour which shocked my higher susceptibilities and made it impossible for me to form any closer intimacy with them."

It is only birds of same feather that can flock together. Men possessed of opposed

temperaments can hardly unite in bonds of love. One who loves cleanliness can hardly put up with the unclean habits. A lover of chastity can hardly form ties of love with a debauchee. A loyal heart rarely, nay never wastes its love on a traitor. A merciful man can hardly love a most cruel person. It is the antagonistic feelings that bring about war. This is at the root of the storms of oppositions that we generally find raised against even ordinary reformers. History is full of records of the fights that the lovers of liberty had to face at the hands of those cruel and interested people who were anxious to keep alive that most inhuman, most atrocious and most horrible institution of slave-trade. Such is the fate of innovaters, and such the destiny of those who live, think and act against the established order of things in mankind.

Bhagwan's activities were directed not against one evil or one wrong, but they were directed against all such forms of wrong and untruth that he came to realize truly as untruths and wrongs. Rightly therefore he remarks:--

“Owing to my uncommon religious beliefs and declarations, my peculiar rites and ceremonies, my opposition to traditional forms of custom, and usages, I could not attract to me those who were void of any regard or respect for my unique forces. Hence all that I got for my labours was violent opposition.”

This opposition never deterred Bhagwan for a single moment from the onward march to his goal and dissuade him from the world of his activities. He says:—

“These evolved highest forces moved my thoughts and body much in the same way as lower feelings influence the thoughts and activities of lower men. Being possessed by them.

(1) It became impossible for me to lead any man to any course of life which was antagonistic to good;

(2) It became imperative on me to contribute my services to the good of human and sub-human existences;

(3) It became imperative on me to engage myself in the most difficult task of research in the world of truth and to propa-

gate far and wide any truths that I succeeded in discovering; and

(4) It became absolutely imperative on me to launch and carry out my siege operations against the citadels of all forms of evil and sinful practices, all forms of false religious beliefs etc., and not only rescue, as many human souls as I could, from their fell grip but to form these liberated souls into an organized body with the sole object of evolving higher life in them." (*Vide Atam katha*).

This wonderful and evolved condition of Bhagwan's soul-life enabled him to see what others did not see, and to achieve what others were absolutely incompetent to achieve. His pen and tongue, being the vehicles of his unique soul-life, carried singular charm for many. In a short while, Bhagwan won reputation for being an unsurpassed orator of his time and a remarkable journalist. There were thousands in the public who would otherwise look askance at him for his singular and forward activities, but who would all the same hang on his lips when he spoke.

When he spoke on non-religious topics i. e., when he had to make a speech on any political subject or any topic of general interest, the meeting place however big in dimensions used to get packed up to its utmost extent. Hundreds of hearts felt strange fascination for him. One Barrister, who heard Bhagwan's speeches in his youth, once said "when your Guru spoke in the days of his youth, the very walls used as if to shake. His most thundering and eloquent voice could be heard distinctly even at very great distances. He was wonderful master of words." It was universally acknowledged that he kept his audience spell bound. *Bhagwan was always unaffected by public applause or public condemnation.* He was lover of truth and goodness. He loved to serve them. His absolute motives of conduct were his unique loves and their corresponding unique hates. Hence he was ever ready to face any amount of hostility which his loyalty to Truth and Goodness brought on his head. Consequently the world around him was not only impressed by his vigorous pen and marvellous power of speech but by his

unique character. The worst enemies of his, several times spontaneously burst out "Oht Pandit Agnihotri is a marvel of moral power and spiritual insight."



CHAPTER X.

Bhagwan's Propaganda against evil.

The unique forces of love of truth and hatred for untruth and unique love for goodness and hatred for evil made it impossible for him to compromise with any untruth or any evil which he believed as such. Nay it made it impossible for him to let untruth rule and evil permeate without raising his mighty voice against them. This was the reason which led Bhagwan all unprompted and all unaided to start in 1875 two journals on his own responsibility and at his own expense for the service of his fellow human beings. He called his Urdu Paper "Biradar-i-Hind," i. e., "Brother of India." The Hindi journal lasted for 19 months, but the Urdu journal continued its useful career for full 7 years. The articles in these journals, read even to-day, strike one with the wonderful fervour, vast sympathies and hunger for truth and intense anxiety to wipe out evils and falsehoods, which animated the spirit of Bhagwan—their writer.

We draw upon this rich store of inspiring writings to show the relentless war which Bhagwan waged in those early times against evils and in defence of higher life.

Voice against Drinking.

In the December issue of the "Brother of India" of the year 1876, Bhagwan wrote a long article on "Drink and its Evils", which not only clearly indicates the motives of Bhagwan in raising his strong voice against this horrible evil and his fearlessness in exposing it, but a curious fact that his appeal is made to the reason of man and facts and laws of Nature and not to any book or revelation or superstition or authority. And this was done in 1876.

He writes:—

"As the use of various intoxicants and specially of spirituous liquors is spreading fast in our land, *and is breeding, as a matter of course, any amount of evils* leading to physical and spiritual ruin of man, involving him in disgrace, in poverty and various other ills; but since, in spite of the growing light of education and knowledge,

the evil flourishes unabated, and the infection is spreading far and wide, the writer has taken up his pen against that evil in accordance with the Persian proverb, "If I see a blind man and a well ahead to which he is moving, it is sinful to remain silent." The object of this article is *to stimulate in man a desire to see what is right and what is wrong and to appeal to his reason and sense of justice* (which two possessions have got him the designation of the highest among all creatures) to decide for himself how far the use of spirituous liquors is consonant with his reason and with his sense of justice; and not only to abjure it himself but to help his other brethren to get free from its grip".

Continuing further, Bhagwan Dev Atma writes:—

"When we look at a man, we see that like animals he eats, drinks, sleeps, wakes, procreates, instinctively tries to avoid harmful things and resorts to beneficial things. Along with all this, he possesses something which gives him pre-eminence over all animals. He possesses progressive intelligence. The animals do possess intelli-

gence but it is of very elementary kind. There is no limit to the intelligence of man. Hence there is no limit to his progress."

"What is meant by progress of man? What are the means to achieve that progress? On the surface of it progress implies change from one condition to a better one. This change never means change from iron into wood or wood into a monkey. By change we mean an advance made in the bodily or mental conditions with which we are equipped at birth.....As opposed to this there is a change which we call degradation....."

"This progress which is an imperative duty of every man to make is twofold—physical and spiritual. Physical progress is attained by the fulfilment of all those conditions which we term physical laws and which lead to physical health and well-being of man. The spiritual progress rests on the fulfilment of all those conditions which we term spiritual laws."

"It is no doubt true that one should give precedence to spiritual welfare over physical welfare. But so long as the soul is living on this earth in the tabernacle of (gross) body, we have also to minister unto it. Its health

and progress proves a great blessing. Nay, if one only looks after the health and well-being of one's body, one is bound to make some progress in his spiritual life as well."

"It is a well-known proverb, 'health is wealth'. Undoubtedly health of body is a great boon. Hence it is obligatory on man to fulfil all those laws of Nature which lead to health. The necessary function of the progressive intellect which man is endowed with, is to investigate into the laws of health by itself and to avail oneself of all such laws which the sages and scientists of old have unearthed for us. A study of our own Sanskrit literature would convince us that even in those days of yore when our land was at the top of all other lands so for its civilization and moral progress were concerned, our forefathers were not indifferent to the considerations of bodily health. Nay, they laid it down as a primary duty of man, and hence made immense progress in the field of knowledge relating to it. All this is evident from a short perusal of our ancient books. They did not confine themselves to theoretical knowledge. They made these researches a practical creed of the people.

Even to-day we find several customs which have their origin in this practical application of health laws. Daily baths among Hindus, clean hearth to partake of meals, use of fragrant things like flowers, sweet-scented perfumes, rubbing of *chandan* on body, sprinkling of *attur* and essence of rose and rose water on the occasions of marriage, burning of camphor and *hom* for the purposes of purifying air, all illustrate the vestiges of the glorious civilization of the old. But when the wheel of time changed its course, the light of knowledge and civilization began to dim, the sun of our country's glory set, and ignorance, darkness and illiteracy set in, many good usages began to fade and disappear....."

"But the wheel of time has again turned. The advent of the British proved a precursor of the light of knowledge. The net work of schools, opened at various places by the Educational Department, have breathed a spirit of enlightenment in the dead bones of our land. Hundreds and thousands of persons have profitted by these fountains of knowledge and have attained heights of great enlightenment and ability. The work of progress is

getting brisker every day. The youths of our land are endeavouring fast to introduce Western civilization into our land."

"We feel a reasonable pride in the progress that our country is making in education and knowledge. *But our joy or pride is not unmixed. There are certain aspects of Western civilization which strike us with consternation.* The condition of our youths is the living illustration of the saying 'little knowledge is a dangerous thing.' This more often than not leads to the ruin of our young men. Some marvels of the western education, wrought in the lives of a few Indians, have created in the hearts of the general youth, an anxiety to imitate the Western civilization indiscriminately and mould our land after that. They seem to lack the critical faculty which might enable them to sift what is good from what is evil. *No nation in the world at any time of its civilization can claim monopoly of all virtues and immunity from all defects, drawbacks or evils.* Why does it not therefore strike our youths that in the midst of shining good that they reasonably see in the British civilization, there may

be something of evil and dross in their customs, manners, usages, practices, etc. The absence of this critical faculty has produced disastrous results in the lives of our young men. *They rarely imitate what is good in English civilization. But they seem to be over earnest in imitating the evil side of their civilization.* This rapid imitation of the evils causes a reasonable apprehension in the minds of the thoughtful portion of our land that if this state of things continues unabated, there is bound to be a calamitous end of many a youth."

"This prefatory note leads us to the review of that aspect of the evil side of British civilization which is concerned with the Drink question. Our Indian youths seem to feel a sort of morbid attraction for this vice. The progress, made with giant strides in drink, fills us with fear of the inevitable degradation of our land. It is this evil in the life of the Britisher which our youths feel pleasure and pride to copy and assimilate in their lives. This is alchoholism which is a fatal poison".

"The use of drink is most popular with all such European lands where Christianity prevails. So far as our knowledge goes the Christian religion does not clearly prohibit the use of drink. Some of Christian customs on the contrary sanction its use. During Christmas they have to follow a religious custom in which friends and relations congregate together and each of them takes up a cup of wine, and deeming it to be blood of Jesus Christ, drinks it off straightway to the sacred memory of Christ. They imagine, that the wine thus quaffed, would enter their bodies and purify their hearts. On marriage occasions these Christian people freely use wine. Even on ordinary dinners or other entertainments they consider wine as the most necessary accompaniment. The host considers this the best way of expressing cordial greeting for a guest, much in the same way, as offering of smoke to a guest is considered as a sign of welcome in our land.In fact these Christians use drink in place of milk."

"It is a matter of sincere gratitude that Hindu and Mohamedan religions prohibit the

use of this noxious water....But prohibitions in paper is of no use so long as man himself does not reflect upon the nature of this evil, and by reason and experiment realise the dangers involved in its use. How many there are who realize drink as an evil, because it is opposed to the laws of Nature and thus refrain from it. Hence he is a true abstainer who probes into the very nature of this evil and feels it as absolutely opposed to those laws of Nature which relate to the bodily health and well-being of man. Hence we ought to treasure this advice in our minds, that we should not use any such thing, before we have exercised our reason and critical faculty over it, and found it for ourselves, whether its use would benefit or harm us. Unquestioning imitation of any such evil is fraught with great dangers for every man."

In this strain Bhagwan continued to dilate upon the evils of drink in subsequent articles. It would pay even to-day to read them.

Even in the year 1876 the appeal that Bhagwan Dev Atma made to his readers was not of this or that book or this or that belief. He called man to exercise his faculties of

judgment over the evils he unquestioningly imitates and discover for himself whether that evil conforms to or contradicts, not commands of so-called God but the eternal, changeless, universal and dependable laws of nature pertaining to the bodily health and well-being of man. This is an appeal which alone is calculated to liberate human minds from the strong chains of superstition and falsehood, servile homage to books or so called revelations, and lands a man in the regions flooded by the sunshine of absolute stern facts and laws governing them. Besides this, the motive, behind Bhagwan's agitation against evil even at that age, was his great compassion for those, who went straight into the jaws of death under the mistaken notions that pursuit of such evils was a mark of respectability. Even to-day there are thousands, who imitate evil European customs, usages and practices as the only passport for entry into the so-called higher circles.

CHAPTER XI.

Defence of total abstinence from all forms of flesh-taking.

Though Bhagwan Dev Atma was an Acharya of Brahmo Samaj, its leader and its life and soul in the Punjab and though there were several Brahmos of great eminence who took flesh, Bhagwan Dev Atma hated the practice of subsisting on the slaughtered corpses of poor dumb, innocent and useful animals merely because they were not able to defend themselves, and man had developed a diseased taste for their flesh. In the month of July 1879 Bhagwan published in the columns of his own magazine "Bradar-i-Hind" a big article on the basis of an English journal. The caption of the article was "Flesh is not the food of man." Wrote Bhagwan:—

"One English journal lays down twenty-four reasons in support of the fact that flesh does not constitute the food for man and *man should not use it as food*. As some of the

reasons are clear, strong and convincing and throw a flood of light upon this subject and the baneful results of flesh-taking, we publish them for the benefit of our readers:—

‘1. The internal and external bodily constitution of man indicates clearly that he has not descended from the line of carnivorous animals. He is brought into being in order to subsist on vegetables, grains and fruits.....’

Besides this there are several other reasons recorded, which we briefly touch upon as they are now very familiar to our readers. It is stated that man as a rule takes flesh of such of the animals as are themselves herbivorous or living on vegetables. Hence instead of having vegetables first hand, he takes them second hand. This flesh consists of only 36 per cent of the real nutrition and 64 per cent is water, while grains like wheat contain 80 or 90 per cent of body building properties. The carnivorous animals prey upon others at night time while night is intended for man to sleep. Hence he does not belong to carnivorous type. All such animals that have served man since

ages and are known as strong and swift-footed are those which live on vegetables such as cow, bullock, horse, ass, camel, etc. Vegetarians again are free from some of those fatal maladies, which have made their abode in the body of non-vegetarian persons. Among the Greeks there were a class of people known as Spartans. They have left a name for courage, strength, diligence and beauty of form and features which is unsurpassed in the history of man. All these persons were strict vegetarians. It is also a well known fact that the victorious armies of Greece and Rome which caused terror among enemies were living on vegetable diet. Their downfall among other causes can be traced to this fact also that they gave up living on pure vegetable diet and adopted flesh-taking. Several features of body found in man speak eloquently about the suitability of only vegetable diet for man. The carnivorous animals do not perspire while man does perspire. The carnivorous animals do not masticate their food. Man does. Carnivorous animals drink water by licking with tongue. Man like other her-

bivorous or fruitarian animals drinks water by taking a quaff. Animals living on grains or fruits have more saliva than carnivorous animals. The greatest thinkers of the world like Plato, Plutarch, Diagynus, Zino, Seneca, John Welsely, Swedenbourgh, Shelly, etc., were either strict vegetarians, for all their lives or the best portion of their lives. Again the moral sense of normal man revolts at the sight of the tortures undergone by animals when the butcher's knife is whetted upon their throat. Lastly carnivorous animals as a rule are blood-thirsty, ferocious savage, while herbivorous animals are comparatively gentler, more sober-minded, more serviceable and less savage. Even when carnivorous animals are fed on vegetable diet they lose much of their ferocity.

These reasons hold good for all times.

Bhagwan's hatred for flesh-taking was so full and deep that he has laid down an unalterable condition of membership of his unique society, that every such person, anxious to get himself admitted as its member, should among other conditions pledge himself against taking flesh. Such a person is even required

never directly or indirectly to help others in this hateful practice. Hence none of the Dev Samajists can ever be a flesh-taker.



CHAPTER XII.

Most powerful opposition of evil social customs.

Every higher force lends its own light and power to its possessor. Bhagwan Dev Atma's love of goodness and repulsion for all that was antagonistic to goodness filled his heart with unique light and power, and made it impossible for him to compromise, besides other wrongs and evils, with anything that was evil in customs, manners, usages, practices, etc., or sit silent in the face of them. His own growing light showed him what was good or evil in different relations and his unique soul moved him to accept the first and reject the other even in the face of any amount of difficulties or risks. As a boy of hardly 12 summers he commenced, as said in part II, educating the two ladies of his house when it was considered extremely objectionable to educate women. This happened in 1862. His noble wife was only a girl, when his ceremony of *gauna* (bringing the bride home) was per-

formed. She was unlettered then. And yet he educated her himself. She learned Hindi, Urdu, Bengali and even English. He gave her equal opportunities of growth in higher life and service. She shook off *purdah* in public when she came to Lahore, and she was a solitary woman of her class then. She also devoted her energies for the amelioration of her sex, as Bhagwan Dev Atma did in the service of all. When she died a great void was felt by the public at Lahore and outside. One gentleman wrote when he received the news of her death:—"In this land she was the one lady who knew and felt, that she had come into the world to achieve some higher purpose in life." From Amritsar an Arya Samajist wrote:—"Shrimatiji was not of the common run of human beings. This our land has really felt the loss in her death because in her this country had great hopes of growing better." A gentleman from Ambala wrote:—"I would not have been half so unhappy if my own wife had died, as I have been feeling from the time I have heard about the sad demise of your noble consort. The passing away of such a pure, such a

noble woman and such a true well-wisher of our race is not only painful for you, for me and others but is a source of misfortune for the Punjab ladies." One gentleman from Allahabad wrote:—"There is not the least doubt that the premature demise of Shrimati Lilavati is a real loss not only to you (her husband) but to the whole Hindu race."

And yet Bhagwan Dev Atma alone had a hand in moulding and educating his noble companion into such a cultured and self-sacrificing soul. His innate higher forces made it impossible for him to let ignorance or selfishness remain in his own wife. Hence the one Social Reform worker in Hindu society was Bhagwan's own wife.

It was in the month of June 1877 that Bhagwan Dev Atma wrote a note on the evils of child marriage which is not without its own peculiar significance. He wrote:—

"The readers of our journal must have realized fully, that child marriage is a source of infinite harm to our country and is the chief cause of degrading and dwarfing our future generations. Its manifold evils are

at least clear to our educated bretheren. *There are lakhs who believe this to be an evil custom. But these persons lack moral courage to stand against it. They do not muster up courage to remove it.* On the contrary the fear of their ignorant custom-ridden community people, works like a nightmare upon their heart. Instead of guiding their less enlightened bretheren, they accept their guidance, for the fear of being in their bad books. It is our belief, that, so long man is void of true higher life, he is bound to be a bond slave to the worldly-minded people. It is well known that a slave of the world will not be able to do any such truly noble and good act which is opposed to the prevalent custom of the world and which is actively resisted by the unenlightened community. Hence there is rarely a person or none at all who has the courage to break a long prevalent evil social custom."

This was the voice raised by Bhagwan in 1877, when it was an anathema to talk against prevalent evil social customs. This was the time when Arya Samaj was not even born and Swami Dayanand landed in the

Punjab for the first time to set in motion his own movement. To talk against such matters was a blasphemy. But to actively remove them was inconceivable. And yet Bhagwan Dev Atma practised in his own life every opinion he preached.

He raised his voice not only against child marriage but in that short note he showed his strong disapproval of any form of marriage, which did not let bride and bridegroom to exercise their own free will in the choice of one another and any such rituals and ceremonies which were superfluous, unmeaning and harmful. He again wrote in 1877:—

“Our readers would be glad to read that a marriage is about to be celebrated which is not only opposed to the custom of child marriage but which is calculated to strengthen the custom of bride and bridegroom exercising their own choice in marriage. The ceremonies to be performed would be absolutely free from all symbols of idol-worship and unmeaning or superfluous rites.”

This novel marriage was celebrated next month. And the presiding priest for the

occasion was Bhagwan Dev Atma himself. What a freedom from all bonds of evil public opinion, or what a singular courage to stand by what is good, does this small incident show. Public opinion is a huge monster. Even to-day when there are lakhs who realize child marriage to be an evil, the orthodox Mussalmans and Hindus are agitating against Sarda Act which demands that minimum age of girls for marriage should be 14 and even a great personality like that of Pt. Madan Mohan Malviya had to bend to orthodox opinions and stand aside when this Act was passed. Not a single person from Bhagwan Dev Atma's own big community was with him, in what he did. And yet he dared to stand by what he believed to be good, irrespective of all considerations of risk, harm, bad name or even persecution.

The marriage was celebrated. The news were published in the form of a note in the July issue of 1877, of "Biradar-i-Hind." We quote some portion of it to show that it was the first marriage of its kind, in the whole of the Punjab and hence something novel and unorthodox.

“In our issue of May we gave a notice of an altogether new form of marriage that was to be celebrated at Lahore. There were several persons who were extremely anxious to attend it and see its performance with their own eyes. We are glad to write that it came off and passed off with extreme success. It is a pride for Lahore that after ages long time it witnessed a day when the first and the only marriage ceremony which was celebrated by means of reformed rites, took place in this land of the five rivers. We heartily congratulate Babu Navin Chandra Roy specially and other members of the Brahmo Samaj generally, who helped in the completion and success of this novel ceremony.....Pt. Shiv Narain Agnihotri (the original name of Bhagwan Dev Atma) performed the functions of the presiding priest. Besides the Hindustani ladies who mustered strong there, there were about 300 persons of various beliefs and creeds who attended the ceremony. In fact the pick of the cultured Lahore society people were present on the occasion.”

“When all persons took their respective seats.....the party of singers sang one of the

hymns composed for the occasion. Then the presiding priest took his seat on the raised platform and offered prayers for special benedictions and the successful celebration of the ceremonies. Thereafter the bride and bridegroom were introduced to the public. They received public ovation in deep resounding notes. Then the bride and bridegroom took preliminary vows. Presents were exchanged by both. These consisted of clothes, jewellery, etc. which were brought there for the purpose. Then the father of the bride was asked to publicly declare that he was willing to give in marriage the hand of his daughter Bishwa Boha Devi aged 14 to Babu Madan Mohan Sarcar aged 30. Then four witnesses (two on behalf of the bridegroom namely Lala Ganda Mal and Lala Ralla Ram and two on behalf of the bride namely Lala Shardha Ram and L. Beni Parshad) were nominated for the occasion. These four witnesses evinced their consent to be witnesses of the ceremony in that assembly. Thereafter the hands of the couple were united and tied by wreathes of flowers prepared for the occasion. Then both were made to take

special vows in relation to each other and offer hearty prayers for life long loyalty to each other.”

“After all this was over, the presiding priest gave his own sermon. This was indeed the crowning touch of the whole occasion. This sermon was felt not only interesting and elevating for the new couple for whom it was primarily intended but even for the general audience. The priest addressed himself individually to bride and bridegroom, described the duties and responsibilities of the new relationship into which they had entered and the laws and principles, which it was their bounden duty to abide by, in order to successfully fulfil their respective obligations from Hindu scriptures, which pertained to the occasion.”

In defence of women's rights.

In the course of his illuminating sermon, the presiding Acharya said something in defence of women's rights which when read even in this century and in our own times, appears quite refreshing and instructive. Said Bhagwan Dev Atma as Acharya of that ceremony:—

“If we look to the underlying laws or principles of the coming into being of man and woman, we see clearly that they are born equal. Apparently, we see that there are certain attributes in man which are absent in woman; while there are certain attributes in woman which are absent in man. But the presence of certain qualities in one and absence thereof in another makes them complimentary to one another. This is what Nature shows us. They—both man and woman—are dependent upon each other. They become complete only by their happy and harmonious union. Justice, therefore, does not permit us to define one as inferior and another as superior. It is really most painful and distressing to see that even though Nature has produced man and woman equal, the undue arrogance of man has led him to condemn woman as inferior. Even the Western nations—whom we call civilized and about whom it is said by the men of low understanding, including some of the so-called educated persons, that they have given too much liberty to woman—have not given equal rights to woman and time is

not far when they will give woman the status, which Nature has emphatically laid down for them. But we feel sure that the time is bound to come when all these disabilities (attaching to sex) would be wiped off. In our land treatment accorded to woman is so very sad, that one has to hang down his head in shame." Addressing the bridegroom, Bhagwan Dev Atma said:—

"It is your duty, Madan Mohan Sarcar! to fulfil your duties and your obligations in this connection so well and so satisfactorily, that it may serve as a unique example of equality in treatment and status of man and woman."

These words in the year 1877 must have jarred upon the ears of many. But Bhagwan Dev Atma had shown, in his own personal case, the most brilliant illustration of the equal status of woman with man. He permitted his noble wife full opportunities for physical, mental and spiritual evolution and for equal service of mankind. As the Founder of the Dev Samaj, Bhagwan threw open all the avenues of all the possible positions of trust and service to woman.

In defence of widow remarriage.

It was in the month of June 1880 that Bhagwan Dev Atma organised a regular society and published its existence, in the columns of "Biradar-i-Hind" the prime object whereof, was to help the down-trodden Hindu widows, from the slough of the enforced widowhood. Its objects, methods of work and conditions of membership ran as under:—

(1) "The object of this *Sabha* (society) is to give information to such of the widows, their relations or helpers, who are willing to remarry, about the names of the persons, who are ready and anxious to marry widows and who are otherwise fit for them; as well to inform such persons who are willing to marry widows about the names and whereabouts of such widows who are willing to marry and who are otherwise fit for them. It is also the object of the society to inform the public that widow marriage is allowable by the religious scriptures. It is also the object of the society to render every kind of proper help in the celebrations of such marriages.

“(2) In order to carry out the objects, the secretaries will be appointed in various centres such as Lahore, Agra, Calcutta, Bombay etc, who will maintain two strictly confidential registers. One of these registers would contain the names of such of the widows, who are willing to remarry and who have either personally or through a relation or helper of theirs, informed the secretary of their such intentions. The second register would contain the names of all such men, who are willing to marry widows and have conveyed to the secretary their such intentions. These registers will not be accessible to any but the genuine and whole-hearted supporters of widow remarriage or those willing to set an example by themselves by marrying widows. In no case shall the registers be shown to those who are open enemies of this movement or who attack it.

“(3) Those who would help forward the object of this society would be called its members. Two lists of members would be maintained. The first shall consist of those who do not hesitate to declare before the

world their open adherence to the cause of widow remarriage. The second would contain the names of such of the members who want their names to be kept a secret.

“(4) The following persons have agreed to work as secretaries for the present:—

Pt. Shiv Narain Agnihotri, Lahore.”

Thus Bhagwan Dev Atma whose original name was Pt. Shiv Narain Agnihotri was not merely the organiser of this new society but was its open advocate and the first secretary. He was always in the forefront of every kind of reform, however unpopular it then was. His love for goodness was too imperious a force in his unique soul and it led Bhagwan to actively champion every cause which helped goodness irrespective of favour or frown of the world and all direct or indirect shafts of persecution and vilification. This mighty force, set against all forms of evils, was indeed the most priceless treasure for the Punjab specially and India generally. It was the one unique force to lay an axe at the root of that monster tree of evils, which had grown tall and broad in

the darkness, ignorance and pall of fictions which flourished for centuries in our benighted land. But those whose heads and hearts had grown immured to this blighting pall took fear at the dawn and active manifestation of this unique force and assumed an attitude of opposition, which was insane but gathered volume and strength as time went on and assumed horrible mass form. But the unique love of goodness which had blossomed in all its glory in the unique heart of Bhagwan, carried in its very texture the seeds of sure victory. And thus, though the highest benefactor of mankind was persecuted most horribly, the cause for which he stood up took root and gradually and steadily conquered and flourished.

Bhagwan championed the cause of widows not only by open advocacy in 1880, but helped in the marriage of widows. When a time came for him to marry after the premature demise of his first noble wife, he led an example in his own life of widow remarriage. Thus widow remarriage had the best advocate in Bhagwan Dev Atma, at a time, when it was an anathema to even speak in favour of that reform.

CHAPTER XIII.

**Hatred against life of selfishness and love
of pure unselfish service.**

Bhagwan Dev Atma's entire soul-constitution militated from his very childhood against the life of selfishness as that was inherently antagonistic to the love for goodness. Love of selfishness is eminently fitted to produce evil callousness, disharmony in relations and all forms and kinds of crimes and sins. Bhagwan was an inveterate foe of evil and was determined to root out of the world the source and fountain of evil in human nature. In his own being he laid down practical example of a life always tuned to one song of not only eradicating evil but doing active service of others. Hence when he came to Lahore and was led by his unique nature to associate himself with everything that stood for reform, he felt an imperative urge to reach his country people by means of writings. The fact that he started in 1875, two papers, illustrates amply the existence

in Bhagwan's heart, of deep sympathy for his own countrymen and motherly anxiety to minister unto them, irrespective of what sacrifices he must necessarily have to make for them. In the columns of his journal "Bradar-i-Hind," dated 1st June 1876, Bhagwan writes as under:—

"In the month of May 1875 we convened a meeting. We called very fine learned Pandits who were unbiassed in their outlook and conscious of the present degraded condition of our people of this land. We placed before them facts regarding the degradation in our religion, in our morals and civilization, in the decline of Sanskrit language and in various other branches of our country's life. All of them were of one mind that the condition of our country was really most deplorable and that it would not be an exaggeration to say that in some respects animals lived a better form of life than our countrymen. We felt thankful that time had come for the decline of such a state. The present Government had providentially come, not only to give us the blessings of peace, order and protection; but the great benefits of enlightenment and

culture. These peaceful times are extremely favourable to us. If during such favourable times, we sit with folded hands and ourselves do nothing for the promotion and progress of the cause of our moral and religious amelioration, it would be a matter indeed of extreme sorrow. It is the most paramount duty of such of our countrymen, who have acquired education and enlightenment, who are free from the jaundice of bigotry and partizanship, who realize the importance of moral life and religion, to come forward and let not this golden opportunity slip out of their hands, and bestir themselves to help our land to come out of the present vortex of decline."

This appeal of Bhagwan went home to the great Pandits present.

"All of them felt the necessity of taking measures to remove this sad state of affairs. It was resolved to issue two journals in Hindi and Urdu under the title of "Brother of India" with the prime object of enthusiastically publishing in them vigorous and learned articles on moral, social and religious subjects."

“After this it was placed before the meeting how to meet the expenses. *The very talk of expenses produced a sort of unpleasant sensation among those present.* The Editor (*i. e.* Bhagwan Dev Atma) however removed their confusion and anxiety by volunteering to meet all expenses. They however promised to contribute some learned articles for it.”

Did they keep their promise? The humanity specially in India can agree whole-heartedly in the reasonableness of doing something for the good of others provided it entails no financial sacrifice or mental labour. What happened in this case is thus described in the journal:—

“In the first place hundreds of hand bills were published and widely circulated announcing the starting of journals and their object, and creating in the public a feeling for the need and importance of such a venture and securing subscribers thereof. When some subscribers were secured the journals were started in the month of May 1875 when their first issue saw the light of the day. Since that month the journals have been re-

gularly printed and published. Before these papers were published we entertained a sanguine hope looking to the object and aims of these journals that out of the Urdu and Hindi speaking people belonging to the Pubjab, U. P., &c., which number 4 to 5 crores, we shall get, to start with, at least 400 or 500 subscribers; and which number would gradually swell as their importance would grow in the eyes of the educated people.....But our hopes have been dashed to pieces. Though the journals have made distinct progress so far the subject matter is concerned and after seven months of their existence even pages have been increased from 16 to 24, the response from the public has been comparatively very small. Not to speak of the subscribers, even those Pandits who were in the beginning enthusiastic about writing articles for our journals have silently slipped away."

But all this did not in the least discourage Bhagwan to an extent as to drop the venture when those for whose good they were started, were so callously indifferent and those who promised help to write for them silently dropped off. Bhagwan did not

start these journals with any mercenary object in view. Again it was not a venture of any society. Bhagwan as an individual started them with the altruistic object of awakening his countrymen to the horrors of their decline and helping them on to make progress in their social, moral and religious life. It was a divine motherly feeling for helping the helpless and promoting the health and progress of the soul-life of man. As the feeling behind the venture was love for goodness and repulsion for evil, all these discouragements did not damp his spirits and cool his ardour. Day by day his love grew and hence though two or three gentlemen made some contributions to the Hindi journal, the Urdu journal was edited by him all alone, while the financial burden was shared by none.

It is curious that in those days all other journals were edited by Mohamedans alone. There were several Mohamedan editors and writers, while Hindus, though educated in greater numbers, showed no inclination in this line. A Mohamedan journal sometimes contained all articles from the pen of various

subscribers—all Mohamedans—while the editor wrote not a single article. This showed the interest Mohamedans felt in propagation of their ideas.

Bhagwan had laid down a great truth that a journal which was started for educating public opinion should not be one man show. It should be a society's venture. Many persons from the public writing from their own view-point should feel it a social obligation to contribute their thoughts in a journal. *If society does not awaken to this great social obligation, it is not alive.* The very existence of any race or nation depends on the principle of corporate life. *What concerns many should be felt by them as work of the many* Hence every journal started for the service of any society should command as a necessary element, sympathy and active co-operation of its members.

Bhagwan did not get the co-operation in those days as Hindu society was not awake. Bhagwan was the first Hindu to lead the way as a great propagandist.

But this apart, the morale of the subscribers was also extremely deplorable. Says

Bhagwan in the issue of his Urdu Paper for June 1876:—

“The second deplorable factor is the absence of response from the public and consequent paucity of subscribers. We do not lament this fact from any sordid motive of monitory gain. Those who know us can endorse this fact that such a motive is foreign to our nature. We only feel that if any public work receives no adequate public response it can never flourish and gain permanent footing. India at present is so circumstanced that such of its children who have gained liberal outlook on life and are feeling intensely for the welfare of our motherland, possess as a rule no financial power. They are as a rule poor; while those who roll in wealth waste away their money in the gratification of their sensual pleasures. They feel it nothing short of death to contribute money for public good. Under these circumstances what a deep shock would a true lover of country receive, when he sees failure staring him in the face in his beloved object of public good. What a cold water is cast on his warm enthusiasm and his noble throbs.....”

"There are our subscribers who have, on their own application, been enrolled as such, and yet when the time comes for them to pay their small subscription, they grow cool and reluctant to pay. When this journal was started several respectable persons of a locality including several Extra Assistant Commissioners applied for the paper being sent to them. We began sending it to their names without advance as they were apparently highly placed. We continued sending it for full seven months. But when in the month of December we wanted to close our yearly accounts for the last year, we sent a request to them to pay up their subscription. But they observed absolute silence and sent no reply. This request was repeated. Ultimately bills were sent to them. But they did not care to attend to them. At last being utterly helpless we stopped sending paper to their name. From that time upto now we have not troubled them again with our demand."

"Non-payment of such a small amount by them is a matter of no great loss to us. What pains and amazes us is the morale of

such persons enjoying such eminent position.

These gentlemen proudly attach to their names, the designation of E. A. C. Their private life is such that they do not pay off a rupee or two which they owe to others. This is their sense of justice. How can such persons, who deny justice to their own creditors to the extent of even a rupee or two, administer even-handed justice to others.....”

There is one amusing instance of a subscriber which Bhagwan had mentioned in the same article, which we find also instructive and make bold to quote here:—

“One gentleman, a Head Clerk and Brahman by caste, became its subscriber from its very inception. The paper was sent to his address for full 8 or 9 months without his having made any advance. After reading our journal for so many months he wrote that as we exploded belief in idol-worship by reason and logic, he considered it a sin to read it any longer, as nothing would remain of Hinduism, if idol-worship was demolished. We sent a reply to his letter. We wrote to him that we were sorry that we made him according to his own statement a sinner for

so many long months. The object of our journal was to save man from sin and not to fling him into it. It is sad that he did not inform us earlier as we would have refrained from putting the load of sin on our shoulders, and he should feel sure that the journal would never again be despatched to his name and address. But we wrote further that as sin must be expiated, he should in order to get necessary expiation send us the amount due from him. The man got the letter and never sent the amount that he had to pay. It is strange that man becomes a sinner when he reads several contributions one after another in several issues of our paper but he does not become a sinner when he refuses to pay his debt to us in the form of subscription. What a reason! What a humanity!!”

This can give us an insight into the extreme difficulties under which Bhagwan Dev Atma when aged only 25 ventured on a singular enterprise of pure public service in order to awaken his countrymen to their own declining condition and make an endeavour to take them forward on the road of progress. This was a time when press was practically

monopolised by Mohammedans who were being generously helped by their co-religionists. The Hindus had been woefully indifferent so much so that when a vigorous and high class journal which commanded great esteem in the fraternity of journalists was started by an individual for philanthropic purpose, there was hardly any response, any appreciation, any practical help from any body. The entire burden of printing, publishing, despatching and even meeting money obligations was upon his own shoulders. It was, on the one hand, his deep and full repulsion for the life of selfishness and, on the other, the pure unselfish and unadulterated love of goodness which made it possible for Bhagwan Dev Atma to continue this venture for full seven years. And thereafter too if this journal was closed down, Bhagwan started another. Throughout his public career extending over 50 years he ceaselessly served mankind by his most vigorous, illuminating and extremely uplifting pen.



CHAPTER XIV.



Service of others by means of public speeches etc.



Bhagwan Dev Alma created a stir in the public life of Punjab not merely by pen but by propagating higher life and higher truths by means of sermons, conversations, public lectures and addresses. On page 59 of his Autobiography, Part I, we find description of those unique motive forces, which imperiously led him on to make the best contribution in the cause of human uplift. He writes:—

“The feelings of sympathy and service of others had already awakened and developed in me. Hence on witnessing around me thousands and millions of souls sunk in the mire of false beliefs or creeds and most pernicious social customs and usages, I felt an overmastering urge in my heart to bestir

myself and to extend the light of truth as far as I had myself got it. This was the reason for my starting two journals in 1875, one in Hindi and the other in Urdu. Besides writing for these papers I began delivering lectures and addresses."

We confined ourselves in the last few chapters to his journalistic venture. We gave a few instances of his service of his land by holding public meetings and private discourses. Bhagwan being a teacher in Government School, got summer vacation. But these he did not spend as *do-nothing* holidays or recreation time for attending to some worldly object. His one passion was to rescue mankind from evil, wrong and untruth as far as he himself possessed the light and to grow in them feelings of true higher life.

In the month of August 1879, Bhagwan had a long summer vacation. This is how he spent it:—

"During his August vacation, Pt. Shiv Narain Agnihotri went to Multan with his family members. He stopped there for about

three weeks. He delivered two public lectures there, one on "Our real weakness" and the second on another subject.

There was a large audience which mustered strong there to listen to him. Besides these, he held three worship meetings in which he delivered highly illuminating addresses. Even Shrimati Agnihotri (revered wife of Bhagwan Dev Atma) held two worship meetings for the benefit of the ladies besides holding private discourses with them and delivering addresses. In the worship meetings that she conducted 30 ladies attended."

Let us hasten to add that during these days Bhagwan belonged to Brahmo faith and was its *Acharya*. At Multan too he had gone as Brahmo missionary. There were some few Brahmos there who possessed fervour for their faith and for whose benefit Bhagwan had gone there. He writes about them:—

"The members of the Brahmo Samaj though few in number are full of life and energy. Two or three leading members

possess strong feelings for their own amelioration and for the welfare of their country. They possess noble spirit of co-operating with every form of activity intended for general and public good. Luckily those members of the Brahmo Samaj who live in Cantonment have their residential quarters in the same locality and neighbourhood and have therefore frequent occasions of meeting one another. This proximity of residence is helpful and extremely desirable as it not only brings them closer and develop social amity and good will among them but gives them greater chances and scope for joint deliberations on any good work and scheme of public service and joint action. The local Samaj has started a girls' school and a reading room which receives papers in Urdu, Hindi, English etc. The members are collecting funds for erecting a Mandir there and it is expected that it would be an accomplished fact in the near future."

This was the bright side of the life of Brahmo Samajists at Multan which Bhagwan brought in forefront before his readers. But he never desisted from exposing defects

in order to draw pointed attention of his people and others to their removal. Hence Bhagwan wrote about them:—

“But there is one matter which is extremely painful and sad, and it is this. In common with other Indians the members of the Brahmo Samaj at Multan are woefully indifferent to the problem of improving the lot of their women folk. As yet they have not awakened from their dead sleep in this connection. *They do not realize the fact that our land would never march on the way to progress so long our women do not come forward with the key in their hands to open wide the gateway of our uplift.* This key with which our women folk can help forward our cause is their own education. This education is possible only when they are given equal rights and equal opportunities for progress. We feel sure that men would consider it impolitic and unwise to any longer continue indifferent to this great truth and most glorious secret, and would pay full attention to the education of their ladies.”

Again as soon as Bhagwan returned from Multan, he went to Amritsar and delivered a lecture there in the Government School which was largely attended by the general public; held one religious meeting in the house of Babu Shiv Chandra Sen where also many a person flocked to hear him. (*Vide*, "Biradar-i-Hind," Oct. 1879, page 318—320).

It was again in the month of February 1880, that Brahmo Samaj of Amritsar celebrated its first anniversary. Bhagwan Dev Atma at the young age of 30, was already at the helm of the Brahmo Samaj affairs. Hence, the entire burden of carrying on the deliberations and engagements in this connection to a satisfactory conclusion naturally fell on him. We find in the columns of "The Brother of India," following informing para:—

"At Amritsar, the first anniversary of the Brahmo Samaj was celebrated on 29th of February 1880. Many members of the Lahore Brahmo Samaj attended the occasion. Pt. Shiv Narayan Agnihotri—Pracharak Sadharan Brahmo Samaj—delivered in the

Town Hall a day before (*i. e.* on 28th) a public lecture on "The Religion of Nineteenth Century." He traced the history of the growth of religion from the dawn of man upto the present times by profuse quotations from historical records and showed how with time religion has been winnowed of the chaff of many false beliefs and false superstitions and is growing by accumulated treasure of truth into something really delightful and fine."

"In the end he appealed to the audience not to treat with indifference the net result of the labours of mankind extending over hundreds and thousands of years which was a priceless treasure won by the sacrifices made for it by millions of men, and that they should avail themselves of the great chance opened before them for their own highest good and the highest good of their own future generations."

How Bhagwan's programme for 29th was crowded can be clear from the following note:—

"The day began with holding *kirtan* for some time when Pandit Sahib delivered a sermon and then an address which he made

interesting by profuse quotations from Upanishads. Then at noon there were readings from Sikh scriptures. This lasted for one hour. Thereafter for two hours a conference was held for the propagation of religion. After a short interval, *Nagar Kirtan* was held. In the evening, Pandit Sahib delivered a lecture, near Town Hall in an open garden to all those persons who had mustered strong there to listen to the singing of hymns and music. The subject of this lecture was "Need of Religion."

Again at page 191 of the same journal, we find a general notice which announces the organisation of Central Punjab Brahmo Samaj and makes the following Public declaration:—

"Every Saturday a meeting in connection with worship is being held in the house of Pandit Shiv Narayan Agnihotri, under the auspices of the Brahmo Samaj. In this meeting lectures too are delivered. Every gentleman is invited to attend irrespective of the considerations of his caste or creed."

At page 246 of the same journal, we read:—

"In the month of July 1880, Pt. Shiv Narayan Agnihotri, Missionary Brahmo Samaj, had gone to Multan and Amritsar—two important centres—for the purpose of propagation of religion. A short account of his labours we insert here for the benefit of our readers."

We refrain from quoting the entire report for want of space. But to what extent the public appreciated Bhagwan's labours is somewhat evident some from the following note published by a non-Brahmo editor of a non-Brahmo paper, "Safir-i-Hind." This note was published in its issue of 17th July 1880:—

"Pandit Shiv Narayan Sahib Agnihotri—Drawing Master, Government High School Lahore, Editor "Biradar-i-Hind" and Missionary of the Brahmo Samaj—who is a capable, pious and well-meaning gentleman, delivered here at Amritsar, on 10th of this month, a lecture on "What is Religion?" On 11th he delivered another public lecture and on the 12th he addressed a public meeting on "Nature of Revelation." We were not personally present in his first lecture. But we were present when he add-

ressed the public on the "Nature of Revelation." The subject was common enough. But it was handled in most decent and refined manner. The audience heard it with rapt attention and felt delighted. This address treated a subject vast in its nature and delicate to handle. The speech of the most learned Pandit was very frank and unequivocal. In our humble opinion, we feel that there can not be two opinions about what he said. We are believers in revelation (*i. e.* book revelation). But we can say that it was not easy to differ from Panditji—the way he dealt with the subject. If the learned Pandit were to reduce his lecture into a book form and publish it, it is bound to benefit the public."

It is not every man who can elicit from an opponent the above admission and appreciation on such a delicate subject as book revelation—in which Bhagwan had no faith—and which forms the belief of the overwhelmingly great portion of thiets whether Hindus, Mohammedans, Sikhs, Christians and others. *Bhagwan in fact broke a new ground in the public life of Punjab by popularizing platform addresses, and by propagation on a vast*

scale both by pen and speech. He was the pioneer who paved the way for all that. His extraordinary powers, added to the most singular eloquence he possessed, attracted audience in vast numbers and as the editor of "Safir-i-Hind" remarked it was not easy to differ from him when one heard him unbiasedly.

How Bhagwan used to crowd his programme even of a single day can be evident from the following brief note:—

"On 3rd October 1880, Pandit Shiv Narayan Agnihotri went to Amritsar for propagation work. As soon as he reached there, he began, at about 11 a. m., worship and prayer meetings. He delivered an address also. Again at about 2 p. m., he began religious conference which lasted upto half past five. Sometime after when the shades of evening fell, he delivered a public lecture in the spacious open yard of Durbar Sahib, in which he dealt, for a considerable time, on spiritual life in most felicitous and easy terms so that all could understand him. It must have benefited those present."

How Bhagwan passed his time at Lahore in the service of the cause he loved, can, to some extent, be known from a short review of his activities in February 1881, published in the form of Notes in the "Biradar-i-Hind," of 1881 page 8:—

"The weekly lectures which Pandit Shiv Narayan Agnihotri delivered in the Central Brahmo Samaj had the following for their subject:—

'Is God near to us or distant from us? (2) A Natural longing in every human soul for peace and the way to attain it. (3) God does not abandon us if we do not renounce Him. (4) Worship God with love.'

This was a time when Bhagwan believed in God as some being living and controlling human destinies. However after several years of observation, experience, experiment and growing inward light, he realized it to be a huge delusion and he endeavoured hard to rescue mankind from this false belief.

The following subjects formed the matter of discussion in the "Bhratri Sanmelaṇ Saṁbhā" of which meetings were held every Friday:—

“What are the obstacles in the path of our social progress? (2) Why do the people of our land deal in untruth and how can this evil be eradicated? (3) Why are the people of our land so cruel and unjust? What are the ways and means to make them justice-loving?”

“On the 16th February an anniversary of Theosophical Society class was held in the house of Babu Navin Chandra Roy. Pt. Shiv Narayan spoke in the meeting and *said that it was opposed to moral principles to show indifference to all such matters of the Brahmo Samaj which form the basis of the betterment of the society* and to call that attitude the love for independence. No God-worshipper, be he a Brahmo, can be independent of moral principles. It is not right for any man to say, when the question of accepting a truth or principle is involved, that he is free to accept or reject it. It is possible that a man may be too weak to practise a truth but it is incumbent on him to accept truth and support it. With belief in God, every believer is pledged to say that he would love God and

follow His commandments. To observe moral principles is to act in conformity to the will of God."

Again

"On Sunday the 28th February, a *Shradh* ceremony was held in relation to the late Babu Madhu Sudan Chakarvarty. This ceremony was presided over by Pandit Shiv Narayan Agnihotri. He offered prayers and then delivered an address on a scriptural text from Upnishads. The subject of his address was:—

'Know God who is most worthy of knowledge, so that you may get salvation from the pain of death.'

After this address, Bhagwan spoke to Madhu Sudan's brother on the sacredness of the fraternal tie which binds brothers and sisters and the void of that love and regard which he must feel by the death of his brother. He then carried consolation to his aching heart. The ceremony was concluded with a common prayer for the benefit of the departed soul.

This briefest possible note on the activities of Bhagwan Dev Atma can convey to our readers at least this much idea that the programme of public service of Bhagwan was always full and that he was indispensable to his society on all occasions whether of marriages or deaths or weekly or other meetings in prayer hall or on platform and to all others who were interested in topics of social welfare.

Bhagwan Dev Atma not only shepherded the souls of Brahmo flock and delivered any amount of public lectures and addresses on the beauty and indispensability of religion, as he in his own light understood it to be, but he was ever ready to take up the gauntlet flung at his Samaj. He was the writer of the Brahmo Samaj. He was the speaker of the Brahmo Samaj. He was the preacher of the Brahmo Samaj. He, as a rule, presided at its marriage or other functions. He even presided at their death ceremonies. He was always in the forefront as exponent of Brahmo faith to the world. He was its defender. Hence, when one Indian Christian Missionary, Mr. Nilkanth, delivered a lecture

in Mission School in which through ignorance he raised some objections to Brahmo faith, Bhagwan Dev Atma did not let this challenge go unanswered. *On 7th March 1881*, he announced and delivered a public lecture to a big audience in Brahmo Mandir Hall in order to give a reply to the objections raised against and to enlighten the public as to the nature of the Brahmo faith. Mr. Nilkanth accompanied by one another missionary also attended the lecture. Bhagwan expressed great wonder that though Brahmo faith had been in existence for over half a century, men and specially Christian missionaries who had come to India to preach religion, were as a rule ignorant of its nature and teachings. Bhagwan said:—

“Men as a rule are ignorant of what religion in fact is. Those few who have got some knowledge about its nature are, because of want of light or of higher education, not able to comprehend the means to attain it. There was a time in the history of Greek civilization when some of its philosophers taught that by reason man was not competent even to get knowledge of material

things not to say of the intricacies of religion. But those days are gone. *In these days reason has absolute jurisdiction over all sciences*, and observation and experiment are accepted as the methods of investigation. *In the world of religion we find to our great pain the limited vision of old that reason has nothing to do with religion.* But the day has dawned when the mankind would avail itself fully of the benefits and guidance of God-given light of reason and not turn their back upon it as that would expose them to the charge of ingratitude towards God who has given them this great boon. Even before this, unconsciously they have been accepting guidance of reason without acknowledging due debt to it. Let us hope they would no longer revolt against it and thus grope in the darkness of ignorance."

After these preliminary but very necessary remarks, Bhagwan Dev Atma described as a Brahmo the four special characteristics of Brahmo faith which distinguished it from all other religions of the world.

Bhagwan continued to spread far and wide the light that he had got, by means of public speeches. We find in the columns of the "Biradar-i-Hind" at several places some short notes on series of lectures that Bhagwan Dev Atma delivered in various places. In the journal dated January 1882, we find that on 14th and 18th December 1881, Bhagwan delivered two lectures in Central Punjab Brahmo Samaj on "Faith in God" and "Brahm Jiwan". Again we find that in the month of February 1882, Bhagwan delivered series of lectures on "Concentration," "Contemplation of God," "The one thing essential", and "Power of Faith." Again on the occasion of the anniversary of erection of Brahm Mandir held from 23rd to 26th, Bhagwan conducted a worship meeting and delivered a sermon on "The new life of soul."

What is meant by new life of soul?

Bhagwan said "The life that is ordinarily lived by men in which lower desires rule supreme is not at all what is meant by new life of soul. This new or higher life does not develop in man so long as he possesses no

unshakable and true faith in the divinity of God. What is meant by faith? *Those who believe in the existence of God or who deny such existence live practically the same kind of life. Hence they are both alike. Till a true abiding faith develops in man his lip profession of faith in God would not avail. By true faith in God, we mean the observation of the inner divinity of Godhead. It is sad that only a few persons out of millions attain to this true faith.*.....

.....This Mandir has been in existence for the last ten years. Let every Brahmo member—man or woman—review his life and find out how far he has realized in his life the true object of the Brahmo Samaj according to principles laid down by the society. On the right reply to this introspection of our inner life rests the future progress of our souls. The progress of Brahmo Samaj does not depend so much on the beauty of its principles as on the life lived by its members.”

Though Bhagwan Dev Atma believed in God and at that time mistakenly believed that the unique life that he lived was nothing but

a reflection of God's inner life in him, he had caught the fact that all that was needed was change of life. He abhorred the life bound to lower desires, lower passions, lower ideals and darkness about soul. He himself lived a singular life whose motive forces were extreme sympathy for the suffering souls and love for truth and goodness. This life he called new life. He called upon his Brahmo friends and mankind to partake of the blessings of this new life.



CHAPTER XV.



Propagation against Caste-system and other social evils.



We assign a separate chapter to caste system because we know how even to-day this form of insanity rules Hindu mind. It shall be very interesting to read Bhagwan Dev Atma's views even in the seventies of the last century.

Bhagwan Dev Atma's sympathy for the suffering souls and his unique courage led him to raise his most thundering voice against all evils including time honoured evil social customs. Bhagwan hated hypocrisy and insincerity as fatal poisons to soul life. Hence he would not take shelter under any subterfuge. When he believed any evil to be an evil he would not even remain silent merely because the whole world rose against him. He knew no fear and sought no favour at the cost of truth and goodness. He was the most outspoken, candid and honest exponent

of whatever he believed to be true and good. Hence even in seventies when India was submerged under the pall of ignorance, superstition, moral and spiritual prostration, when reformer was treated as heretic and claws and teeth were shown to him by thousands, when friendship of years and ties of whole life-time snapped, when even a bold mind dared not raise his axe at the dead crust of the old and accumulated evils, when social boycott—the most horrible of intimidations—stared in the face of the honest thinker and worker, Bhagwan Dev Atma led a violent crusade against all evils including the most time honoured, most deeply cherished and centuries old evils of caste system and food prejudices. In the year 1877, he wrote a long article in support of certain reforms. In the course of that article, Bhagwan wrote as follows (which is a free translation of his Urdu article):—

“Social bars against food and marriage are two such evils in Hindu Society as can safely be considered the main and root cause of all social evils and national degradation and their horrible results. It is a fact that

in our various social relations and ties and in our every day existence these strict social bars of food and marriage have so deeply affected us to our great detriment, that the wise among us simply lament in bitterest terms and shed profuse tears. They most anxiously await the dawn of that blessed day, when our countrymen would awaken to the horrors of these two evils as most dwarfing of chains and break them down. Our people as a rule are ignorant even of the truth of their own religion and of the fact as to how our ancestors, who had distinguished themselves as highly civilized men, looked upon these two matters relating to food and marriage. It is because of this ignorance that the people stand amazed at our writings and view them as strange. If they were to dive into the mines of their own religious scriptures and care to understand them or refer to a learned Pandit....., they would come to know that food bars and caste bondages, which our countrymen consider as the be-all and end-all of Hindu life, were absolutely non-existent in the life and times of our ancestors, acharyas and rishies,

Our ancestors observed no social distinctions in matters of food. They observed only one distinction irrespective of the position or caste of man and it was, that they boycotted a wicked or foolish man whether he was a Brahman or a Shudra. So far marriage is concerned, they permitted matrimonial relations with all classes and races of people irrespective of the considerations of caste or colour. There are several instances recorded in our literature which show that our people frequently intermarried with those whom we now call Pathans. Pt. Dayanand says so often that Aryans married even American ladies. In short, when light of knowledge and civilization illumined the four corners of our land, such absurdities and such narrow-mindedness would have no existence whatsoever in our social constitution and mutual relations. Their standard of social life was one which the present day educated, learned and patriotic Indians consider most desirable and proper and which they are endeavouring heart and soul to renovate in this land without caring for the favour or frown of the public. It is thousand pities that the pall of

darkness should have set so firmly on our eyes owing to the wheel of time having adversely turned that inspite of our possessing eyes we do not see. The old noble traditions and good usages and customs have vanished from our sight and look as matters of old forgotten hazy past. Instead of making any progress, we degenerated from the high pedestal of great civilization and became half civilized or semi-savage."

"But our destiny has again taken a turn for good. It had risen from the East before this and set in the West. But owing to our contact with the British, the sun of destiny has recommenced to cast its rays upon our land. As these rays illumine our hearts, we behold once more our old glory and old conditions and feel enthused to turn our mind to them. We are sanguine that we shall once more see those times again which our hearts hanker after. When India enjoyed in days of yore the benefits of high civilization and freely permitted intermarriages among all classes and races of people, they observed strictly two most beneficial principles which pertain to marriage. Firstly, no body got

his children married during infancy or minority. Secondly, both the bride and bridegroom after receiving due education exercised the right of selecting a mate for themselves. The result of the observance of these two good principles was that the children of such marriages enjoyed fine physical health and possessed full mental vigour. Because they exercised the right of selection and enjoyed mutual love, trust and comradeship."

"But in our days both these right principles are honoured in their absolute breach. Child marriage is almost universal. The pair which is bound in life-long wedlock is not permitted to have any voice or right of choice in their marriages. Thus liberty of children even in this matter is mutilated and cast to winds."

Voice against injustice to girls.

"So far as education is concerned we find a strange attitude of people manifested towards it. In general man has come to realize the benefits and blessings of education for boys. This is the reason why education among boys is fast developing. But so far

as education of girls is concerned, there is no progress made worth the name. The wonder of wonders is that those, who have themselves received education and have therefore personal experience of the blessings of education, show absolute lack of interest in the education of their own mates and their own daughters. *It has never dawned on those so-called enlightened people that to educate one-half-of the race and to keep the better half in mental darkness vitiates the universal law of national progress.* This is the reason why the ignorance of women proves deadly for our national well being. We see the effects of this attitude of men towards education of girls. We find that these educated young men who have by some accident escaped the matrimonial bonds having been fastened on them during childhood and are thus celibate, or those who happen to lose their first wife, feel themselves at sea when they have to seek a life long mate for themselves. They feel in their mind that it is impossible for them to lead a happy wedded life, if they marry an illiterate girl howsoever accomplished in beauty of form and features. They therefore

despair of entering into married life. They endeavour to marry from a foreign land. If they fail in that endeavour, they live a compulsory celibate life.” (Pages 270-74.)

**Hindu religion does not uphold
caste-System.**

Again, in the columns of “Biradar-i-Hind” for the month of August, Bhagwan Dev Atma wrote an article on the excellence of Hindu Dharma. In the course of the article, Bhagwan wrote on caste system as under:—

“There are many persons who labour under a misapprehension that Hindu religion warmly upholds the custom of wrong caste distinctions. But this is far from Truth. In the body of Rig Ved, we do not come across any such distinction. The Hindu Epic, Maha Bharat does make mention of the caste, but it says:—

“This entire world is nothing but Braham. There is no special value attached to “Varan” or caste divisions. In the beginning all has emanated from Braham. It is the deeds that have led to natural divisions of

men into classes or castes. It is the conduct, behaviour or *karma* which classified men into groups called castes. In ancient times, 4 sons of the same father fell into four castes according to their inner life and behaviour. In olden ages, the general conduct of a man made one man a Brahman, another a Kshatrya, third a Vaish and fourth a Shudra. It is so recorded in Manu.'

'Shudra becomes a Brahman and Brahman degrades into Shudra. The Kashatryas and Vaishas are similarly formed.'

"It is again recorded in *Maha Bharat*:—

'Truth, charity, forgiveness, good behaviour, worship, mercy, etc. wherever found constitute that person a true Brahman. The qualities of Shudras are not found in the life of Brahman. *No man by birth becomes a Shudra or a Brahman.*'

"Again, in a dialogue between Shiva and Parbati, we find the following:—

'O Devi! The Shudra becomes a Brahman by doing all the above good deeds and by adopting a noble behaviour or character. A Vaish becomes a Kashatrya if he adopts his calling. O Devi! One who does all the above good

deeds, becomes a clean Brahman even though he is born in a Shudra or low family. A Brahman who associates with impure and wicked souls and is a debauchee at once degrades from his position and becomes a Shudra. O Devi! Even a son of Shudra is worthy of regard at the hands of Brahman, if he is a conqueror of his low desires and is pure in heart, because it is a commandment of God that a child of Shudra grows superior even to a Brahman if he possesses human virtues and is of noble character. *Try to bear these my words in heart that no one becomes a Brahman because he is born in the highest family, because he wears a sacred thread, reads Vedic scriptures and is born of some noble father. He is a Brahman who possesses noble character.'*

"It is apparent therefore that by noble behaviour man becomes a Brahman. A Shudra can therefore become a Brahman by adopting higher tone of life."

"In pursuance of this noble principle which Hindûs in olden ages believed in and followed Kans Rishi though born of Shudra parents, was accepted as a Brahman.

Bishwamitra a Kashatriya became a Brahman by his noble deeds. Thus our ancient history conclusively shows that there was a time when Hindus had not formed those air-tight and mutually exclusive compartments of caste as are found in the social make-up of the present day Hindus."

Bhagwan not simply preached this reform but lived it in his own life. It was this wonderful harmony in his words and deeds which created in the hearts even of his great opponents an admiration and awe for him.

**Protest against unequal marriage of the
President of Arya Samaj with a girl
of 8 or 9.**

It was in 1877, that the then President of the Arya Samaj, a distinguished graduate who had, it seems, lost his wife, married a girl aged only 8 or 9. This conduct of a responsible office-holder and enlightened person who stood ostensibly for social reform deeply stung Bhagwan and he published a long article in the form of a dialogue which we freely translate here to give some idea of the deep hatred that Bhagwan possessed against evils:—

"A—Let me give you an instance. Do you know our President?

"B—Yes, I know him quite well. He enjoys the title of "Afzal Ulma."

"A—Yes, that is he. I feel that you know him. Recently he married a girl of 8 or 9 years—a poor child who does not know what is meant by marriage or husband. But because Lalaji had not the courage to break old evil social customs he bent to them. And he went so far that though the girl was already betrothed somewhere else, he induced some of his friends to intervene and persuade the girl's father to break off the first matrimonial tie and give the girl to him. The father did so. Thereafter he invited the girl and her father in some private house and secretly had the marriage ceremony performed. When the ceremony was over, he made his marriage public. Nay, he celebrated it by engaging a band to play and giving a sumptuous feast to his friends.

"B—This all is amazing. What an example of social reform! What a precedent laid down by a President? But is it not true that Swami Dayanand has declared

child marriage as improper? In the pages of the Satyarth Parkash, he has not only definitely set his face against such marriages but he has specifically declared that a marriage with a child of 8 or 9 is opposed to Vedic injunctions. Knowing all this why did Lalaji who is President of a Society which believes in Vedic revelation and which openly condemns *Purans* as the unacceptable productions of foolish Pandits, follow in his personal life the teachings of the latter as against Vedic revelation? How can a man who with open eyes goes the wrong way lead others to a right path?

“A—You seem to be very fond of consistency. You require action to harmonise with speech. Come, I tell you something else which would puzzle you still more. Let me tell you the ceremonies which Lalaji passed through (in his unique marriage).

“B—Out with it, please. Don’t mind our getting puzzled at it.

“A—Let me tell you then that no reformed Vedic rites were observed on the occasion of marriage. A Brahman was called to read

the mantras as is the custom among old Hindus.

“B—But is not Hindu system of marriage full of idol-worship?

“A—Yes, idol-worship was followed. When the old ceremonies were observed worship of idols was to form a necessary ingredient.

“B—How strange! Can we call this conduct as conforming to a good principle? If the President of a Sabha tramples upon the principles of that Society, why would members care to observe them? Where is the fun of publishing red handbills and big notices in papers containing the so-called ten principles, if these principles are not to be observed. These principles enjoin explicitly on the Arya Samajists that incorporeal God alone is a worthy object of worship and that a member should abjure untruth and accept truth, and all his actions should conform to Dharma on the basis of the right discrimination between truth and untruth. Is it, I ask, consistent with true or Vedic teachings to marry a girl aged only 8 or 9 years, pay homage

to idols, persuade a father to break the old matrimonial tie of a girl in order to have her for himself? Alas by these actions they outrage not only reason, but religious and moral principles of life. Those persons therefore, who intentionally and with a view to serve selfish interests, trample upon moral principles, not only commit a grave sin but drag hundreds by their example into the mire of sin and wrong. The coming into being of such examples is a sign of the misfortune of our country. It is pitiable that those whom our motherland trusts as her salvation-givers and considers them as her filial children who have qualified themselves in every way to help her forward and break her bonds, (they—these children—) would so far degrade themselves that by their own personal example of lack of morals, they would retard her progress. It is the conduct of such unmanly sons that mother India laments in plaintive notes with eyes streaming with tears and hair dishevelled.”

There follows the *Syappa* (lamentations) of mother India.

An appeal to the educated youngmen of our country.

In the month of January 1876, Bhagwan Dev Atma published an interesting and informing article on the customs of Punjab. In the course of this article, Bhagwan wrote:—

“Those who are educated and possess the sense of discrimination between what is good and what is bad, are bound, in duty, to unite themselves and create conditions for eradication of those evil social customs which obstruct our progress in civilization and morals. Oh! ye young men of India! how long will you sleep a sleep of indifference? Wake up! ye who understand the nature of civilization and march forward. He is not a soldier who wears arms for decoration and not for use in battle. If all your knowledge of right and wrong was intended as a lesson to be recited before a teacher or as a mere subject of a debate within four walls of school or college or only to fill up the pages of examination answer-books as a sort of essay; and if all your written discourses on the evils of early marriage etc., were meant to get you marks in a University test exami-

nation, you behave like a sepoy who fights no battle but wears his arms as mere ornaments. Nay, you do not reap the true harvest of education which is intended to develop in you true love for your country and true sympathy. Remember, you will stand arraigned before the bar of your country for all those evil social customs which you were bound to try to eradicate. This unfortunate land, this degraded and uncivilized race is looking with wistful eyes to you to help them out of these. Does not your heart melt at this mute appeal? Is your heart so hardened that it stands unaffected at the sight of these horrors of evil customs? Is your heart so void of sympathy that it cannot burst into a flame at the agonising sight of the decline of your nation? Oh Indians! have mercy on on this helpless and impoverished condition of your country. Think out the means and work them out so that we may not be an object of contempt and ridicule to civilised races and this our land may attain to that position of power and dignity to which various European powers have reached."

(Pages 10-13).

How far is it incumbent upon us to observe any social custom.

It was in the month of May 1876, that Bhagwan contributed a learned and original article on the above subject. It provides us with a standard to judge the propriety or impropriety of observing any prevalent custom and even testing its nature and conformity to right principles. Writes Bhagwan:—

“Customs are of two kinds. There are firstly those which the society as a body has established as proper to meet any expediency or any emergency. There are secondly those which have sprung up in the social body by themselves as a result of man’s indifference, negligence or want of attention. *There is no doubt that those customs which have come into vogue either as a result of conscious and deliberate act of the society or by themselves, have a binding force on us if they meet the just requirements of social well-being or conform to time and place, and are besides that neither sinful nor criminal, but, as opposed to this, no individual is bound to conform to such*

customs, usages or practices which are not wanted to meet the needs of time, place or occasion and are positively sinful, criminal or harmful."

"There are customs which are confined to one place, one family or one community. There are again those customs which are prevalent in a nation and affect the whole country. But whether a custom is local, provincial or national, whether it affects one family, one community, one race or one nation, it is not at all obligatory on any person who is truly a human being if its observance leads to any sin, crime or wrong. This is a simple, plain and unvarnished truth which even a man of street can with facility comprehend. Do we not see that if there is any custom which is not found in our own family or community but prevails in any other family or community and is on the face of it sinful and criminal, we feel a certain amount of abhorrence for it. As for an example when we hear that among certain sections of Rajput families a custom of infanticide is prevalent according to which the parents kill a girl child merely because they consider it degrad-

ing to be called fathers-in-law or brothers-in-law of somebody, do we not feel it outrageous? The very thought of how the little innocent being is done to death creates a sickening sensation. Our hair stand on end. Our body trembles at the enormity of the action of these inhuman parents. We feel a certain amount of repulsion for such a horrible deed of these so-called human beings. A man possessing true higher feeling of sympathy would not bear the sight of such callous murderers."

"This one illustration is enough to give us a measure of all such customs which are of like nature and which breed sin or crime and dislodge a man from his high position of a human being. Where is a man of common sense or wisdom who would counsel a man to pursue the profession or custom of dacoity merely because all his ancestors have followed it? Where would you find a sensible man who would ask a child of criminal tribe to adopt the calling or custom of theft merely because his ancestors followed it as a matter of course? My Indian countrymen! you can easily find out which customs are harmless, sinless and there-

fore worthy of following and which are those among our society that breed sin, generate harm, bring about our degradation and harm our social well-being and even cast us into the eddies of spiritual darkness”.

Enforced Widowhood.

“Out of that group of customs which are based on sin is one which we term enforced widowhood i. e. refusing equal right of remarriage to a widow which is given to man when he becomes a widower. Your accepted Shatras sanction it. Your own conscience endorses it. But in the face of all this you deny a widow this birth-right because of the influence on you of this evil social custom. You are guilty of a grave sin which not only earns you the curses of the oppressed widows and their sighs and lamentations which degrade you spiritually, but on this very earth you earn disgrace and ill fame of a kind which is simply indescribable. My friends, why in the garb of human beings are you trampling upon reason and sense of discrimination? Why do you sanction this callous behaviour in relation to these oppressed creatures with such supreme indifference

and thoughtlessness of the consequences of this world and the next? Ye people! are your hearts so void of sympathy and your intellects so void of reason that you do not understand even what is sympathy and what is true shame? In that case all your worship is vain. Your so called Ahinsa (*i. e.* mercy towards animals) and consequent abstinence from meat-eating, your frequent spitting when you see, while passing, exposed pieces of animal flesh on the shops of butchers and all your attempts to close your eyes to avoid seeing the ghastly sight, your attempts to drink water after distilling it, your care to walk carefully on the ground for the fear of trampling upon any insect, your these and such other scruples are nothing but sheer hypocrisy. Who is going to believe that you possess any true sympathy for animal life when you show its utter absence in your conduct towards your own dear fellow human beings? Outwardly you look gentle like a lamb, but in fact your hearts are stony. We wonder how sense of shame and true humanity has left this land. We fail to see what fun you seem to find in leading such a life which is void of true

sense of shame and true humanity and that you are not able to cast it off and thus avoid disgrace and ill repute which it brings. Ye educated people of our land! remember, that all your fine coats, pantaloons, ties, wrist watches and other fashionable things would not make you men so long you show no true chivalry in relation to these down-trodden women of your land, and show no moral courage to break down the chains of evil social customs. Is it not true that there are lots of things which were prohibited by your caste, and yet some of them you have adopted openly and some you have adopted secretly? When you have done all this, is it not shameful on your part to feel no mercy towards these oppressed beings and thus leave the evil social path? Remember that when you are enjoying a festive occasion in one corner of your house with many of your friends, there sits in another corner a widowed sister of yours, hardly 15 or 16 years of age, who is filling the atmosphere with the heavy laden sighs of her agonised heart, and is drenching the floor with the flood of tears, but you are not able to listen to her sighs and see her

tears as you are drunken and hence insane. Is all this the net result of your education? Can we not say that in fact you have received no true education at all which alone makes man a true human being? This is apparent from your words and actions which show you indefinitely inferior to so-called illiterate people. It is true that it is easy to slide down the path of sensual life. But it is an uphill task to go against it. You could easily accept all such practices, however opposed to your current customs and received traditions, which purport to pander to your sensual comforts and afford you sensual joy. But you show absolute bankruptcy of manliness in following a course of conduct, however proper and right and however necessary, if it does not conform with your sensual nature. It is indeed thousand pities that true sympathy and true nobility of heart, which might enable a man to forget his self in the cause of betterment of others, cannot grow in any heart save under the influences of true religion. Education, as is ordinarily given, is able no doubt to show to man, to some extent, his duties

and responsibilities, but it is absolutely incompetent to kindle that flame in the heart of man which may help him to forget his personal wants and troubles in his effort to remove the wants and redress the grievances of others, which may fill him with noble resolves and may make his steps firm in the noble path. All these can be evolved by true religiousness. This is the reason why it is very rare that we come across men who prefer sacrifice of sensual pleasures and comforts to acquiring that true religiousness, and who merge their own interests and own welfare in the higher interests and higher welfare of others. *You can never expect from a world-worshipper a spirit of doing good to others.* If he does any good to others, the motive behind it is fame or praise or any worldly interest. *The true sympathy does not germinate in the heart of a world worshipper.* Can you expect from him who shows no sympathy at all even to remove the miseries of those suffering agonies within his very sight, that he would manifest true sympathy for those at a distance from him."

Very pertinently, Bhagwan Dev Atma remarked:—

“He who has no sympathy for mankind is a liar if he claims love for God; for a true test of God-worship is sympathy for mankind. This is the touchstone which discriminates false from true worship of God.”

We can find from this that mere God-worship was of no value in the eyes of Bhagwan Dev Atma even when he believed in God. As his soul was possessed of the unique forces of love of goodness, nothing that savoured of compromise with evil, appealed to his heart at all. He could not admire a man for any profession of God-worship or any amount of devotional ecstasy in God's name, if he saw in his daily conduct absolute callousness towards suffering fellow human beings whom he possessed the means to help.

Who is able to break off an evil social custom.

Says Bhagwan Dev Atma:—

“There are some persons who consider it wrong and pernicious to prohibit widows from remarrying if they chose. But these persons lack that soul power or spiritual

force which might enable them to let their reason and conscience override all considerations of social bonds, and charge them with power to even renounce their community and pass through the fire of temporary suffering in the path of higher reform. The readers of our journal ought to bear in mind that the factor that counts in the way of realizing our wishes is our own individual power. Those, therefore, who have, by divine love, developed spiritual power or moral force to such an extent that a mere sight of misery to others makes them forget their own personal woes or sufferings, would without the least hesitation brush aside all considerations of their community in the matters of evil social bonds and dissociate themselves from all such customs as make them sinful and add to their spiritual darkness. The truly brave and heroic souls who know no fear, do not show courage in battle at mere command of their leader or commander. It is their own nature, their own temperament which fires them up at the hour of battle and braces them up to risk even their most precious lives. It is

these brave souls who proclaim that they are not from among those who show their back in battle, but they belong to that heroic class who would lay their very life in the field. This example of true spiritual courage illustrates what we call religious life. When the flame of this purity and religiosity flares up in the heart of a religious soul, it becomes impossible for him to compromise with any custom, usage or tradition, however hoary or widely held it may be, if it leads to sin or evil. He boldly faces all opposition, all calamities and sufferings which his bold defiance of evil customs may bring on his devoted head. For, he is not at all so much afraid of any amount of worldly troubles and woes as of sin or evil and at no cost is he prepared to corrupt his soul. As a worldly man, afraid of his society is not able to associate with any good act which is opposed to the views of his community, similarly a true religious man is not able to associate with any evil, sin or crime for fear of degrading his soul. It is invariably observed that whenever in any clime or country an evil social custom is renounced and a good reform is introduced, the

pioneers in the battle have always been those souls whom we call truly religious (*Deen-dār*)."

What is required of a true man.

At another place in the same article, Bhagwan Dev Atma writes:—

"When any epidemic say cholera breaks out in any country the Government of the land issues peremptory orders to the medical officers to take immediate measures to stop the ravages made by it. A good-hearted doctor receives the mandate and finds it impossible to sit at home though there is fear of his life. He sees that lives of thousands are in immediate peril. He forgets himself. Nay, even when a fear of any prospective loss of his own most precious life stares him in the face, he brushes it aside and values his own dear life much less than the lives of others. Even when by an accident he really loses his life, he wins the unstinted admiration and reverence at the hands of others and not any reproach or blame. Hence oh ye people of Hind! there is time for such of you who consider enforced widowhood as a dark sin and grave wrong, to gird up their loins and

wage war against this terrible epidemic like a good and noble-hearted doctor. It is derogatory to our manhood to show our back in the hour of war, in the field of battle. Welcome any excommunication which your community may pass on you, if by your sacrifice even ten oppressed widows find freedom. *Remember! he is a man who lays down his very life in the path of truth and righteousness.* Time shall pass away all the same whether you stand forth for the cause of the oppressed or stand lukewarm. But the record is left behind. Enforced widowhood is not only sinful but it is productive of great shame and disgrace for our society. Scores of cases crop up in courts which besides leading to disgrace hold an unforgettable lesson for us, and those who are affected by it see no other way for themselves but to bid eternal farewell to this evil custom."



CHAPTER XVI.



Deep Feeling for the Uplift of Women.

In the year 1875, Bhagwan wrote a very big article on Hindu religion and polity. In the course of that article, published in the August issue of "Biradar-i-Hind," he remarked:—

"Those of our educated friends, who are anxious to introduce in their families the blessings of civilization, ought to feel more earnest about the educational uplift of women than of men. If they do so, we are certain that all their dreams about having a civilized home would be more than realized."

It was in the year 1876 that Bhagwan came to know about a society started at Poona by women for the uplift of women. It is elevating to read how Bhagwan grew enthusiastic over that and gave the news a

prominent place in his paper. Bhagwan wrote:—

“It is with feeling of extreme joy that we convey to all those men and women of our land who feel interest in the cause of the uplift of Indian womanhood, the most happy news that at Poona our Indian sisters have by their own independent efforts started a society for the elevation of their own sex. We feel certain that our readers interested in the uplift of their ignorant sisters would feel as deeply delighted as we ourselves have felt when we came to know about it. *The chief thing which has given us immense satisfaction is that all the leaders of this movement are women.* Their main object in starting this society is to liberate their sisters from that most deplorable state to which their ignorance and want of education has reduced them and raise them to the status of true womanhood. The membership of this society is open only to such women as are above the age of 18 and are able to fluently read and write in their Vernacular. The proceedings of the society are held in Marhatti language. The society has kept before itself the following aims:—

1. Reformation and progress of the existing girls' institutions.

2. Arranging to found institution at places where they do not as yet exist.

3. Arranging to educate in their own houses such of the women who are anxious to receive the blessings of education but are not able to avail themselves of the benefits of Government institutions owing to their own biases or received customs and traditions.

4. Arranging to provide means for such of the women who are destitute or who are not able, because of any physical defect, to earn their own livelihood.

5. Reforming of such of the evils rampant in the sex because of their rank ignorance.

6. Attending to all other such activities as lead to general progress.

Bhagwan concluded this article with a deep prayer that the society may be blessed, may have a long and honoured career and its efforts be crowned with full success.

Removing of early marriage.

It is strange that an act known as Sarda Act has been passed so late as in the year

1929. We are surprised to read in the columns of the "Biradari-i-Hind" for the year 1876 that even in that year some well-wishers of our land including Bhagwan agitated for the passing of an Act in Legislature, prohibiting by law the plague of early marriage. We read in the July issue of the same paper:—

"The idea of abolishing the custom of early marriage is getting stronger in the hearts of our people. Even English papers have turned their attention to this kind of needful reform. Our distinguished contemporary "Friend of India" which is a paper of great standing and which wields an amount of influence in our land, has on several occasions expressed its strong opinion in favour of reform. The talented editor of this journal, writes to say that though the reform of this evil custom is mainly the job of Indians themselves, the Government too is bound to help in the abolition of this evil custom and should not confine its help only in some outward expressions but *should pass an act*, as without any legislative measure complete success is impossible."

“In Bengal too there are signs visible among the educated classes of agitation against this custom. It is however regrettable that the efforts made by them are sporadic and not sustained. The enthusiasm shown by the educated, cools down quickly because of their moral weakness and want of courage. The editor of the “Indian Mirror” has called upon writers not to content themselves with having agitated it once or twice. They should persist in the fight and should not cease their efforts till they have destroyed the evil custom, root and branch.”

“Even in Bombay Gazette, we read a memorial on this subject having been prepared and submitted by a distinguished person of Ahmedabad to the Government of Bombay. This personage is by faith a Jain, and he has definitely put in there that his religion does not favour child marriage and that this evil custom has prevailed amongst them owing to their sheer ignorance. He has prayed in the memorial that the local Government should be pleased to pass some legislative act as only a legal measure can effectively cure India of this almost uni

versally prevalent epidemic. The distinguished petitioner has assured the Government that the educated Indians being aware of the fact that this custom is opposed both to justice and common sense, consider it as most harmful to the people of India and productive of any amount of evil. Even "Friend of India" has written in most unequivocal terms that the time is ripe now when the Government should no longer keep silent over this most pernicious evil and by consultation with Indians about the minimum age of marriage, should pass a legislative measure penalising early marriage. This is only one way of curing this land of this plague epidemic."

Bhagwan concludes thus:—

"There is no doubt that the general mass in India is indifferent, because of rank ignorance, to helping forward the cause of women. But time shall come when Indians themselves would realize the extreme gravity of the situation and learn to respect and honour the rights and claims of women. We would pray that such a day may dawn soon."

Our behaviour towards our women.

How Bhagwan Dev Atma felt even in the year 1876 about the unequal treatment meted out to our women folk, can be gathered from the following words of his. It was in the month of July 1876 that Miss Breton, an English lady missionary, delivered a speech in a public meeting in which she said:—

“Babus of Bengal when judged from their costly and rich dresses etc., seem to live the life of a prince but most deplorable indeed is the condition of their women. They are provided with nothing but a single Dhoti to cover their body and shame which must be costing hardly rupees ten a year to them.”

Several persons in the audience were moved to tears by her pathetic advocacy of women of our land. Bhagwan wrote on this:—

“We endorse every word of Miss Breton and express our deep pain that our treatment of our women should be so brutal and so callous. We welcome from other races as strong a criticism of our tyranny to

our women as is possible for them to express. This indecent and heartless behaviour to our women is not confined to Bengal alone but it is a common scourge of our land. Oh! when would that day come when our countrymen would accord to their women due respect and consider that they also possess a soul."

Duty of husband towards his wife.

It is sometimes curious to study how our countrymen had to wade through the mire of absurd ideas even on the problem of women education. As Bhagwan Dev Atma stood in those days (*i. e.* seventies) as the fearless champion of all kinds of reform including education and uplift of women, several persons consulted him off and on, on several subjects including education of women. Some questions came as a great surprise to Bhagwan himself. He wrote in "Biradar-i-Hind" for December 1878:—

"A large majority of even educated men of our land labour under this superstitious nightmare, whether it is at all good to give education to women, whether husband has any (moral) sanction to give

education to his own wife? Some time ago, a gentleman carried on correspondence with us on this question and when we convinced him by cogent reasons that husband could educate his wife, he was won over. He very earnestly and fondly took to imparting education to his own wife. Some time later, he wrote to us to say that having taken permission from us, he had begun to teach his wife and she had advanced so far as to be able to successfully read herself the books like (1) Four volumes on female education. (2) Prem Sagar. (3) Bishnu Sahasar Nam. (4) Shrimad Bhagwat, etc. The persons of his nature are thousand times better than those who inspite of the light carried to them on the subject, pay no attention to the uplift of their own women and inspite of the very close and intimate relation which, as husbands, they bear to their wives, they show, because of their selfishness, utter indifference to the real welfare of their dear partners. This conduct is an outrage on humanitarian principles."

The present day condition of women.

Bhagwan did not confine himself only to

pen in popularising the cause of female education and uplift. He was known then and for many many years thereafter as the greatest orator of Punjab. He utilised his wonderfully eloquent powers of speech in the service of the cause of women also. Wherever he stood to speak he commanded mammoth audiences in those days. We read in the columns of "Biradar-i-Hind" for Feb. 1879 the following paragraph:—

"Pandit Shiv Narain Agnihotri delivered in "Shiksha Sabha" hall a lecture on "The present day condition of women." People rushed to hear him in such huge numbers that there was hardly a room left in both halls which were full to extreme. Maulana Mohamed Latif, Editor "Anjuman Akhbar" took down the notes in full of the lecture and having arranged them thereafter published them in his own paper of 24th January."

**"My joy knows no bound to see an
Indian lady on a public platform to address
her countrymen"**

On account of his love for goodness, Bhagwan felt divine joy and most sacred

enthusiasm when he saw any lady having climbed high on the ladder of progress. We read the following in the columns of the "Biradar-i-Hind" for Feb. 1879:—

"A pretty long time ago, we had given news in the columns of our paper about the arrival in our midst of a Marhatta lady. During her stay here, some gentlemen had her audience too and thus had personal experience of her ability and attainments. This lady is now in Calcutta. And as the phrase goes in our land that jeweller alone can appreciate the value of jewels, this lady has received such an ovation in Calcutta as was beyond our imagination. She is a young woman hardly aged 20 or 22 years. But her mastery in Sanskrit language is so great that even the greatest Pandits of Calcutta tender her their unstinted admiration. Looking to the number of meetings that have been arranged for her in the houses of the learned and the rich persons of Calcutta, one can safely opine that she has made a deep impression on the public mind of her ability as a Sanskrit scholar and specially her genius in poetry. She com-

poses spontaneously and at the spur of moment poems in Sanskrit on any subject proposed to her. Lately she has given proof of another trait in her. She was invited to a "Literary Club" of Calcutta to deliver a lecture in Hindi on the advantages of education. It is reported that her address was very learned and interesting. But be that as it may, *the one thing that has filled us with joy which knows no bounds is the sight of an Indian woman delivering an address on a public platform.* It is true that if an old orthodox person were to be informed of the fact that a lady stood before the public on a public platform and expressed her views, he would feel simply stunned and get petrified. He would not be able even to comprehend the truth of the statement. But time is a great reformer. However much we may obstinately lag behind but the lash of time whips the world on its forward march."

"When will that day come when millions of our sisters, enveloped, now as they are, in the folds of the inky darkness of fearful night and lying prone and motionless in the grip of the paralysing ignorance, would

awaken and bestir themselves and would banish all darkness and shake off all chill of ignorance by the brilliant light of the luminary of knowledge. May God hasten that day."

Bhagwan! thy herculean efforts hastened that day as no other single man's effort could have done. Thou werst the first to start a Hindu Girl's High School in the Punjab which became a mother institution for others. Thou gavest to Punjab the first Hindu B.A., B.T. Thou gavest to Punjab the first Hindu M.B., B.S. In thy own society, thou wert pleased to see that no woman is left uneducated. Hence leaving few hopeless exceptions, thy society it is of all other Indian Societies that presents by far the largest percentage of educated women in it. In thy society, woman enjoys all the privileges and opportunities of progress and no door is closed against her. Men and women enjoy equal rights and privileges in all departments of life. Thy service to the cause of women is sublime.

"Our girls are in no way inferior to our boys in mental ability".

In the February 1879 issue of his journal, Bhagwan published the news of a Brahmo girl having passed Matriculation examination in first Division. This young girl was awarded a purse of Rs. fifty and a scholarship by the Director of the Public Instruction, Bengal. When Bhagwan came to know of this, he wrote:—

"Indeed this act of the Government in encouraging female education and creating in people fondness for it deserves our country's deepest gratitude. *Our girls are in no way inferior to boys in mental ability.* If inspite of such instances, our educated countrymen do not feel the weight of heavy responsibility which lies on their shoulders so far as education of women is concerned and do not pay sufficient attention to it, it is indeed extremely deplorable and painful sight for well-wishers of our land."

Taking three ladies in a public meeting.

It has become almost a rule now for ladies to attend meetings specially political meetings. But there was a time when no

lady ventured to attend a public meeting. In Punjab, Bhagwan brought about this happy innovation. We have said before that in the month of January 1879, Bhagwan delivered a lecture in "Shiksha Sabha" hall on the present day condition of women. Next month Bhagwan delivered two other lectures on the education of women. The substance of these two lectures was published by the editor "Akhbar Anjaman" in his own journal. The item of news which deserves special mention is that in the second lecture three Brahmo ladies attended. Bhagwan also wrote:—

"It gives us perfect joy to state that besides male audience three Brahmo ladies also attended the second lecture."

What a tremendous reforming zeal must Bhagwan have felt for the cause of women's uplift, even in those days, as to feel so enthused about every step that women took towards progress. Such a novel step by the ladies must have come as a blight to the orthodox and an alarming piece of news to the weak and the faltering among educated, and an act of unusual daring on the part of Bhagwan

to the half-hearted champions; but to none it must have given that perfect joy which can come only to the heart tuned wholly and completely to the cause of reform as Bhagwan's was.

**All our spiritual, moral and general progress
rests on the progress made by
our womenfolk.**

Bhagwan wrote in his journal for June 1879:—

“The entire progress of India in spiritual, moral and other lines rests solely on the progress made by our womenfolk. Those therefore who possess true feeling for the cause of the progress of women deserve our genuine regard no matter to what society they belong.”

The progress of America is due to the progress made by its women.

In the month of June 1879, Bhagwan wrote:—

“In New York, there is an association of women called Psychomatric Society. All the departments of the Church which they have established, have reference only to the

problem of their sex. One of the greatest causes of the progress of America is the comparatively greater regard they show to women's rights than any other country. Special attention is paid there to the education and privileges of women."

**Publicly supporting the cause of widow
remarriage.**

It will not be out of place to make a brief mention of Bhagwan's advocacy of widow remarriage in early seventies. We have dealt with this in some detail before now. But the picture of Bhagwan's wonderful love for women's cause would not be complete without touching very briefly his attitude towards widows. In the October 1879 issue of his journal, Bhagwan wrote:—

"In the August issue of a paper one gentleman wrote a strong and vigorous article on the condition of widows. The writer says that the earth of our land is being scorched by the fire of tyranny and oppression practised on child widows. It is their wails and lamentations, he says which have darkened the horizon of India and it is their

curses which have brought about the present degraded condition of our land. We feel confident that so long the sufferings of these innocent girls and the cause of the uplift of general woman does not move the heart of our people and make them restless, it is utterly improbable that our land can make satisfactory progress and rise in the scale of nations."

Along with this, Bhagwan published in his own journal the news of two widow remarriages at Lahore. Even to talk of widow remarriage in those days was an anathema. To boldly stand for it and to publish its news in the columns of his journal with a note of strong approval was almost certain to be severely opposed by the Hindus. Bhagwan wrote:—

"In the month of August two widows were remarried. Babu Nitobar Mullick, aged 33, was married to a widow, Shrimati Prabodh Malini, aged 20, according to Brahmo Samaj rites. It is a matter of genuine gratification that this widow remarriage was not celebrated among persons of the same caste but

it was also an inter-caste marriage. Several Brahmo gentlemen and ladies were present on the occasion."

"The second marriage took place among high caste Brahmans. The bridegroom was Babu Haridas Bannerji aged 25. The bride was Shrimati Mukti Keshy Mukerji aged 23. These are called true examples of true and good manhood."

Appreciation for an association in England founded to facilitate marriage of the destitute girls.

In the same issue Bhagwan said:—

"In London an association has been formed with the sole object of arranging the marriage of the poor and destitute girls who, because of financial stringency, are not able to enter wedlock. The association has collected 30 lacs for the above object. For the present they have decided to help 100 girls every year to marry. Every girl will be given as a dowery a gift of Rs. 1500."

How every aspect of the cause of women's progress appealed forcibly to the heart

of Bhagwan! Is it any wonder then why women in Dev Samaj enjoy such a prominent position and daughters are treated with greater tenderness than even sons?



CHAPTER XVII.



Physical and moral uplift of children.



The "child" attracted as much attention of Bhagwan as the cause of women. Being a complete lover of goodness, he could not bear the general indifference that prevailed in the minds of parents towards the physical and moral well-being of their own children. Bhagwan took up with his masterful enthusiasm the cause of the child welfare. Once Bhagwan was pleased to remark "Every department of human life lies so woefully neglected and it demands so much whole hearted attention and service of men and women that if they possessed only one or the other higher feeling which could show them the wants, woes and miseries of others, the work of child welfare alone would absorb the whole lives of many." This remark was made on an occasion when Bhagwan saw the eldest son of one of his workers, then a child

of four years, in a physically weak state. His most merciful heart went over to the child and he spoke for about half an hour giving that worker any amount of suggestions. In the end, Bhagwan graciously said "The cause of child welfare appeals to me so forcefully that if I had not been wedded to my supreme life vow of truth and goodness which completely possesses me, I would have felt it a privilege to dedicate my whole life to the service of the cause of the child." It is the cause of child-welfare that led Bhagwan to open several institutions for them.

This wonderful feeling we find in him even in seventies when he wrote long—very long—articles dealing with the problem of child-welfare. We quote here some, to give an idea to our readers how he felt for the child. In the columns of his journal for January 1878, Bhagwan wrote:—

"There is universal consensus of opinion that it is not only proper and necessary for man to develop all such qualities wherewith God—the gracious—has equipped him at birth, but it is a solemn and serious duty on him, in order to deserve the name of man and

to preserve the dignity of humanity. But it is also clear on its very face that if the training of man during his childhood is neglected and no attention is paid to his sound and refined culture, it is a sheer folly to expect of him to grow into a morally civilized human soul during his adolescence or old age. During infancy man is like a tender plant. You all know how a gardner in his garden tends the small plant and what measures and means he adopts to see that it grows straight and develops regularly, so that it may be able to yield in time the crop of fruit or flowers. He prunes it, cuts off its dried twigs, manures it in time, waters it in time and if need be he gives it a support of some kind to help it on to grow straight and thus he has to think of all things relative to its growth. All this labour he takes and all possible scheme he thinks about it merely because he is anxious that his plant should live at least the natural span of life and yield the best and the sweetest fruit and not the sour ones. How tragic indeed is the sight of a man who devotes so much attention and thought to the well-being of the plants in his

garden but is seen so callously indifferent to his own beloved child. Does he in fact spend his time and mind in the cause of the welfare of his own child, sufficiently and so well and does he labour to find out and adopt all such measures for his good as may save him from wrecking his most precious life, and thus acquit himself of the heavy blame of that sin which naturally attaches to those who neglect their sacred duties?"

"Owing to absence of education in our land for some centuries past, *people have ceased to attend to problem of man's dealings or general behaviour in his private life. Our private life is one great question which ought to engage our best thought.* Only men of narrow outlook or low understanding can consider this question as insignificant and not worthy of our consideration. But to the wise and the civilized this question is the most delicate and the most important of all. Family forms a small world in itself. Those who neglect this world and fail to get true light regarding the laws that govern these relations and ~~make~~ it higher and nobler or can be of no

greater service in the outside world. If we choose to remain absolutely ignorant of the knowledge of our duties and responsibilities and the laws of behaviour or conduct towards those with whom we have to live on closest possible terms for the major portion of our life, we should not expect to live an easy and comfortable life and we should not grumble if troubles and miseries become our lot and we see ourselves deprived of the blessings of a civilized and well regulated home. The just but painful results of our this mode of life would not be confined merely to us as individuals, but we would prove harmful to society of which we are a necessary and inseparable part."

"When we cast a reflective glance over the present day condition of our land and compare it with other civilized races or nations, we feel that we need absolute overhauling of our home and social life. There was a time when this land had attained great heights of civilized life. But the wheel of time has cast us down, and now we lie submerged in the debris of our wrecked civilization which fills us with deep pain. There

are some beautiful things still in our race which need tender and jealous protection and preservation. But the general outlook is such that it demands great metamorphosis. This most momentous change is not possible so long we do not start from the beginning *i. e.* do not take up the cause of the child-welfare. It is true that we are anxious to set our children rise higher than ourselves. But this anxiety on our part would avail us nothing, so long we do not introduce all such higher methods of training and upbringing of our children which are civilized. Our present attention is confined only to feeding of our children and ministering to their animal needs. Animals do likewise. We cannot show better behaviour towards our children if, on the one hand, we do not get true light about our own duties and responsibilities towards them and on the other, apprise ourselves of those true principles of human civilization which apply exclusively to man and are most essential for its welfare. So long as we remain in darkness about them, we shall not be considered to have understood our obligation as men."

"When we look at man, we see three things in him. He has a body. He has an intellect. He has a heart. The human child is possessed of an organism consisting of these three departments of his life. Any education or training which neglects any part of the human child's life is absolutely incomplete. From the time that the Government has opened various educational institutions, parents have been sending their children in thousands to avail themselves of the benefits of education. But it is extremely regretted that so far body and heart culture of children is concerned, there is hardly any attention worth the name paid to them. What supprises us most is that even the educated classes show abject indifference to these two great needs of their own children. It seems those evils in child life are a sealed book to them, which are proving a fatal posion for their promising life. They do not perhaps see or do not care to see that portion of their nation's life which relates to their body and morals and which has not only deformed their persons and their soul-life but has produced and is producing terrible

effects on the life of the nation itself. Leaving aside the most fearful havoc which child marriage has played on our progeny and is still crushing it, our present woeful indifference to the physical welfare of our children is responsible for the growing bodily debility and physical break-down of our generation. Is it right to sit with folded hands when our own darlings are silently but steadily getting weaker day by day? How long shall we lie contented in the lap of this awful sleep? Would we let our race go to ruin? No, thousands time no. Not only shall we put fourth herculean efforts to root out the most pernicious custom of child-marriage but we shall study and apply all such principles to the physical growth and well-being of our children as are being applied in the civilized races, and thus feed and strengthen the physical constitution of our generations."

"The moral condition of our people is such as needs no description at our hands. No honest and civilized person can go once to our bazars to deal with shopkeepers who will return without a complaint. In our own

school a boy of high class very triumphantly said, "My father one day took two tickets from the booking office of the value of six annas each. He gave a rupee to the booking clerk. The clerk should have returned annas four to my father, but by mistake he gave him annas twelve. My father was very much delighted to find that instead of four annas he had got twelve annas." We have to teach Drawing to high class students. We ask them to draw lines by hand without the help of the rule. But when they bring to us the work, they were asked to do, we find that they have, as against specific orders to the contrary, drawn lines by means of the rule. We confront them with this and without the least hesitation they blurt out "Sir, we have drawn lines with our hand." We know that they are telling lies. And when we press them hard they half-heartedly acknowledge their guilt. Now when this is the moral condition of the life of those, who pass for the educated people, in matters of such most insignificant character as drawing, one can imagine to what depths they would go when they see before them the

tempting chances of greasing their itching palm? Of what asset these dishonest persons be to any government or nation? What we have described about the honesty of boys is not an exception to the rule. Our land is full of persons of this nature and temperament. It may be that this state of things may be unknown to those who live in seclusion. But those who have to come in contact in various dealings with our people know it as a matter of fact that leaving aside those not conforming to higher moral principles, many of the remaining also are perhaps foreigners to the very conception of what constitutes morality. Let those who choose to blame us for stating this may please themselves. But we cannot shut our eyes to what we see as an evil, and we cannot sit with folded hands when it rules our land. It is no doubt true that no race of humanity consists of all perfect people. All nations possess black sheep. But every race gets a name and distinction according to the quality which prevails in the general run of that race. When we say that climate of a particular place is good, it does not mean that

no man falls ill there and that all the people there are perfectly healthy. What we mean by that is, that general health of the people there is good. In our land there are very few people who follow moral principles strictly in their every day life. The number of those who are devotees of falsehood, hypocrisy, fraud, cruelty, dishonesty, etc. is legion. In the circle of the educated men, we find very few who adhere scrupulously to moral principles. But in majority of them we come across those delinquencies which are unknown to their uneducated brethren."

"What is the root cause of this great evil? We attribute it to the woeful indifference of moral training of the child. It therefore behoves at least the educated class that along with mental education which they consider necessary for children, they should impart to them the feeling for moral principles in daily life."

"When our land begins to give the blessings of moral culture to the children side by side with mental education, we are sure to see the dawn of a day when it would

rise to those heights of civilization which our land is said to have attained in the hoary past and it will then secure a sure place in the galaxy of the other civilized nations."

How deeply Bhagwan valued the life of higher character. It is not surprising then that he started educational institutions with the supreme object of the moral uplift of the children. The Dev Samaj institutions have rightly won the well merited name of moral life developing institutions.

Necessary rules to be observed in the up-bringing of the children.

Bhagwan continued this theme in a series of articles. He did not confine himself merely to directing the attention of the parents to one thing essential *i.e* evolution of noble character among the children. He also drew their serious thought to problems of food, general cleanliness, dress, etc. Even at this time the reading of those articles are stimulating and very instructive. Bhagwan wrote in the issue of his journal for March 1879:—

"We shall at the outset make a special mention of those things which deal directly

with the question of the bringing up of children and which need special consideration at the hands of the general public.

“Food.—Every animal is born with absolute dependence on food for his sustenance. Among men both the savage and the civilized have to subsist on food. As the savage and the civilized races differ widely from one another in various ways and modes of life, in the same way a wide gulf separates them in matters of the methods of food. The savage feels hungry and rushes to any kind of food and rests content when his hunger is appeased. It never occurs to him to enquire into the quality or ingredients of the food essential for his bodily make up. He is therefore completely ignorant of the fact as to the extent that a particular kind of food supplied nutrition to his body. It is not our object here to deal with the scientific analysis of various articles of food. We only feel impelled to direct the attention of our countrymen to the general principle, that while giving various kinds of things to their children as food, they should at least be careful that they specifically keep.

their children out of the reach of those articles which are difficult of digestion and which harm the digestive functions. As for example, taking of sweetmeats prepared by the confectioners on their shops is very common with our people. In towns it is a general custom of the parents to give daily to their children some money to buy sweetmeats. The use of sweetmeats is very pernicious for children. The use of *Puri*, *Kachouri* or *Mathi* also is very harmful for children."

And yet is not this a fact that even to-day these are the very things that parents feed their children upon? In various schools and colleges the articles of food which are most popular among children and students are various kinds of sweetmeats, *puri*, *kachouri*, *mathi*, etc.

Bhagwan continued:—

"As during the first months of infancy of a child, mother's milk is ordinarily the best food for it, in the same way after it is weaned and is able gradually to take food, there can be no better substitute for it than milk, rice and wheat bread (with

the addition of ample fruit; Compiler). As they are simple so they are very beneficial to health and general well being. As it is extremely necessary that a child during its early months should be fed on mother's milk, so it is necessary that after some time it should necessarily be weaned. In the opinion of physicians, the child should have nothing but mother's milk for as many months as he is ordinarily in mother's womb. After it is weaned from mother's milk it may be given cows' milk or if parents can afford they can engage a woman possessed of breast milk to suckle the child."

Cleanliness of body.—After food what contributes most to the health of a child is cleanliness. So far food is concerned the conditions in our land are not exposed to as much reproach as our attitude towards bodily cleanliness. We feel our daily life, as regards cleanliness of body, of house and of all things therein, is concerned, most objectionable. We do not find a great landlord or a wealthy person observing that cleanliness of body and surroundings which we see in an ordi-

nary European. It is not enough for cleanliness that we take bath. Cleanliness means keeping the house clean, things tidied, clothes well washed and neat, and all the house materials free from dirt and well arranged. So far as it is possible we must propagate among our ladies the ideas of general cleanliness and love of order of things, since they are the chief custodians of man's life in childhood. And if they have no sense of cleanliness of person or things, dress or houses, it is idle to expect a growing child develop any sense of cleanliness and tidiness. When we see an ordinary child in ordinary home, we find him so dirty, and so filthy that it offends deeply one's sense of cleanliness. If one were to observe with any penetration, he would find that cleanliness of soul urgently requires cleanliness of body. God the gracious, has confined children to our trust so that by their innocence we may profit spiritually. Is it not our duty then that we should keep them clean and tidy and not spoil even their physical appearance by keeping them dirty and thus injure their health?"

Dress.—Bhagwan dealt with this subject too at some length. He was pleased to analyse first the grounds which have impelled men to seek dress. They are three (1) To cover shame, (2) To protect body, (3) To beautify person. “Those savages who have not had the chance to awaken to the necessity or use of dress are found, all the same, covering some parts of their person with leaves etc. Our people would at once say, that they keep all these grounds or reasons in view when they dress. But a slight reflection would convince us that parents as a rule show lamentable lack of attention to the second point. They do not keep in view the protection of body by dress. Again several superstitions control the choice of dress. Then the dress is not kept clean. Ornaments are frequently used. There are thousands of families in India who labour under a superstition that it is harmful for their children to wear their own and home-made cloth and they beg of old dresses from other friendly houses. Again superstition controls the washing of clothes. For months together the dress is not changed.

Every effort is made to dress the child in fancy clothes of costly nature and thus considerations of simplicity and health are ruthlessly dismissed for the sake of outward display. The use of ornaments on child's person is really a most obnoxious custom. It is true that we find some improvement in this custom, but it would take our people still a very long time to awaken to the object of dress."

Exercise—Bhagwan also emphasised at length the need of exercise for all classes and ages of men as the one means of making body strong and less exposed to disease. During the childhood men are by nature active, energetic and fond of games. But as they reach adult life, hardly one per cent. retains that state or takes exercise to maintain it. They begin to cherish a fallacious idea that exercise is intended only for those who want to be trained as wrestlers and athelets. In our land, the wealthy classes want a conveyance even for a short distance. To expect them to take exercise is to build castles in the air. They therefore turn deformed and unusually unweildy in person.

The higher civilization wherever prevailing, has laid down on all as a necessary obligation to take exercise in all the stages of life from childhood to old age. Our people also need to be awakened to the importance of the use of open air for themselves and their children. Living in congested streets and playing there cannot bless them with benefits of pure air which is found outside the boundaries of town in open fields and gardens. We need to cultivate a habit in all our children to breath daily in open air, by open air games or open air walks.

Bhagwan could not bear evil in any phase of man's life and hence by both pen and tongue he requisitioned his phenomenal powers to the service of his people and in that unique service, he found the greatest and highest satisfaction of his soul powers.



CHAPTER XVIII.

**Struggle to awaken various higher feelings
among others.**

THE BEAUTY AND NECESSITY OF UPKAR
BHAV (FEELING OF SERVICE OF OTHERS).]

In the columns of "Brother of India," for September 1877, at the page 210, Bhagwan Dev Atma wrote a very inspiring article on Who is a "true miser." He wrote:—

"Though the public is not far wrong when it condemns that man as a miser who accumulates wealth to a considerable extent and neither spends it for his own benefit, nor lets others use that for their good; but a slight reflection would show that the word miser cannot be used exclusively for such a person. This kind of miser can deprive himself and others of the use of his vast treasures at the most upto his sojourn on this earth. After his demise somebody

shall have to inherit his great riches. How such a heir would use the inheritance rests on his personal character. If he is good-natured and a capable man, he is bound to utilise the treasures for his own good and the betterment of others. If he is incapable, vicious and sensual, he is bound to waste it away in evil ways. But all that hardly has anything to do with the miser. He on his part parts with his money when he leaves this earth. It afterwards lies with others who get those riches how they use them. Such a miser can be dubbed a miser only upto his earthly career. But the true miser is he who has accumulated the treasures of mind, the wealth of wisdom, some special art, some new experiences and yet without communicating them to others, he crosses the bourne and joins his fore fathers. Do we not see hundreds of such persons who have become learned and distinguished scholars, who have acquired new experiences and have specialised themselves in some art or handicraft, and yet who pass away from this earth taking away all knowledge in their mind without either

imparting their mental wealth to others or preserving it in books and manuscripts for the good of the world? They die the death of animals.

“Is it not our bounden duty to leave behind all our knowledge and experiences in books or other records and thus let others derive benefit from us, much in the same way as we ourselves profit by persuing literature and philosophies left as heritage by others for our good? It is others who planted trees and we reaped the harvest. It now behoves us to plant in our turn new trees in the garden of the world for the generations to come to reap the fruits. In this lies true humanity. Give and take is the law of our mutual dealings in man world. He who simply receives but does not give, is in truth a miser”.

“It is evident therefore that a true miser is he who departs from this earth taking all his wealth of knowledge, experience and learning with himself, and such a man is decidedly worse than a miser who accumulates things of this earth which he has per-

force to leave behind and in the disposal of which he has no part or share or voice after his death. Shaikh Sadi has rightly said, "Do good oh man! consider life a great opportunity and do good before a cry is raised that that fellow is dead."

"Bear in mind therefore that goodness means something which is eternal, which demands of man not to be a miser in the distribution of wealth of his knowledge, experience, learning, new thoughts etc."

This is how Bhagwan tried to win souls to better and nobler life of service to others. Any man who had a spark of feeling of sympathy felt through his writings a great impetus to do something for the good of his fellow human beings.

A glimpse of Bhagwan Dev Atma's own great longing to serve.

At some places in the same journal, we catch the glimpses of the glorious psychic forces of Bhagwan's own soul which not only

cannot fail to elevate us, but afford us a key to Bhagwan's great and untiring activities for the highest good of others.

One correspondent had put some questions to Bhagwan as an Editor and had requested him to give the reply thereto in the columns of his paper. The letter containing questions reached Bhagwan after the August issue was out. Hence the letter could be replied to only in the month of September. Bhagwan's apology for late publication is very significant. He writes:—

“A gentleman from Multan sent a letter to us. He made some enquiries from us pertaining to religious matters. We very gladly publish the letter and our reply thereto. We got the letter in the last month. But it is regretted that it reached us after the issue was out. Hence we could not publish it earlier. Let us assure our readers that it affords us extreme satisfaction to reply to questions of an enquirer whose one motive is to solve a difficulty for himself and who comes with an attitude of a seeker after truth. .

It is a great thing to seek. A seeker after truth has a position in the economy of Nature which is indeed the highest. According to a distinguished Logician and Philosopher:—

‘No belief is worth acceptance in the eyes of the great and the select persons (and not of the wicked) which is antagonistic to facts and truth.’

This brief quotation is significant of the fact that Bhagwan not only loved the spirit of enquiry even in others but felt an extreme joy to help such a seeker. The world has hardly countenanced such seekers of truth and hence it has converged all its forces against one who has dared to think in opposition to received and established conventions or channels of thought and practice. Bhagwan Dev Atma who was enraptured by the matchless beauty of truth and goodness warmly hailed a man who tried to seek truth and did all his best for him without caring for being agreeable or being agreed with or being popular, but he was anxious to be useful in the path of truth and goodness.

This spirit of serving others without being influenced by praise or blame is evident in Bhagwan Dev Atma's writings of those early seventies. When "Brother of India" completed its 3rd year and stepped into the 4th, Bhagwan wrote a long introductory note in the course of which he wrote:—

"Brother of India has been busy for the last three years in the task of cultivating the spirit of reform in this country. It is now beginning its fourth year. During this period it had had an occasion to fall into the hands of and to serve hundreds of Indian brethren. To some it went by itself and majority of them invited it to their homes. Some warmly hailed it and gave it a hearty embrace. Some treated it with scant courtesy. But whether praised or blamed it has served all alike without any prejudice. The zeal and deep interest with which it entered into its career of service has not at all during this period waned. Nay it has waxed warmer and its spirit of service grown fuller and deeper with the time."

This is in fact the test of the existence of any true highest psychic force. Any altruistic force or higher love is a motive power which cannot fail to move the entire being of man, come what may. It carries the possessor through any amount of adverse combination of obstacles and makes him impervious to any considerations of praise or blame. That being his dominating force, his life would be impossible without ministering all his thoughts and energies to its service. Most of the problems of mankind would be solved, only when man is so changed that, on the one hand, he becomes incapable of consciously doing undue injury to any living or non-living being and, on the other, it may be impossible for him to live without dedicating all his powers and possessions for the good of others.

The beauty and necessity of sympathy.

In the columns of the Brother of India for August 1877 at page 248-250, Bhagwan Dev Atma while lamenting the want of response in Hindu and Musalman public towards an

appeal made for the famine stricken people of Southern India wrote:—

“He whose heart is not gentle, who possesses no fear of God and no true feeling of sympathy for the suffering, can never be credited with possessing any heart at all. We have to see how many persons in our land have actually a heart; how many possess the milk of human sympathy and how many possess fear of God. To go into temples and give princely donations there (in the form of offering), to go on pilgrimages and feed, on a vast scale, as many Brahmans as one can, would never show that you possess human sympathy or true fear of God. All that it would show is, that you are utterly selfish having nothing but a business spirit. You are prepared to unstring your purses liberally in favour of only those who would promise your fairies in *Baikunth* (paradise). All this is about Hindus. But what about Mohamedans? In the words of Sir Sayyad Ahmad, the Muslims are not free from blame. They would gladly send lacs and if possible crores to Turkey (where Khalifa once ruled).

But so long as the Muslims expect a place in heavens and lot of *Hurs* to wed with as a return for these liberal gifts, to Turkey, they cannot escape being dubbed as utterly selfish. If they had any feeling of sympathy their charity would necessarily have started at home. Do not Musalmans live in Bombay and or Madras? Do they not suffer the pangs of starvation due to ravages of famine? But it is regretted that to our knowledge not a single Mohamedan has come forward with any donation for these famine stricken people. If the wounded people of Turkey are to receive help from India, do not Indians who are being oppressed by the monster of famine deserve at least as much consideration? If Turks are to be helped with millions, should not Indians be succoured with a few thousands? The hope of paradise led even an impoverished Muslim woman here to part with her beloved ornaments. The hope of *Baikunth* led a Hindu lady to throw into Ganges ornaments worth thousands. But alas! how many have come forward to feed our famished brethren in India in the famine stricken area with so-

much as a morsel? Oh! mercy!! where hast thou gone? Oh! sympathy where art thou? Our hearts break at the sight of our dear suffering land. Our mother land is being ground down by the present calamity. But the stony-hearted children of Ind remain quite unaffected by the pitiable plight of their own stricken mother. They are dead to its lamentations. They do not melt at the sight of small children being cast into waters and thus dying an unnatural death. Oh! my countrymen, if you have any spirit of humanity left in you, awaken!! Open your eyes and see how your own countrymen are faring in the grip of famine. The whole area between Krishna and Cape Kumari consisting of 600 miles and containing vast population, is caught up in the claws of famine and is suffering acutely. In spite of some government help, five lacs have already fallen a victim to this dire calamity. Thousands of villages are laid waste. Hundreds of mothers are consigning their little ones to the tender mercies of water and following them immediately to have a watery grave. The roads are strewn with dead bodies. Oh! what a fate of this greatest among

created beings! There is no one to bury or burn them and thus do the last services to them. If our countrymen show no sympathy the whole area would gradually be washed away and all the men would be dead and gone. Englishmen, whom you call *malech*, are doing godly work. From London itself, about three lacs and thirty thousands have been subscribed and sent in aid of the famine stricken. Do we not deserve to die of shame, if even to-day we sit with folded hands and see the *tamasha* unaffected? This is not an occasion to appeal to Rajas, Maharajas and landed proprietors. This is a time when everyone of our 24 crores of people should come forward and contribute from one pice to one lac and thus relieve the suffering of our own countrymen."

This needs no comment. The very spirit which these lines breath is bound to animate readers at all times.

An appeal for famine stricken Turks.

Bhagwan Dev Atma possessed true feeling of true sympathy which produced an

ache in his heart whenever there was misery. This sympathy was not sectional as no sympathy, if it is a true feeling, can be such. Hence when he read about the famished and miserable state of the people of Turkey, he could not help rising upto the occasion and extending friendly hand to them and rousing others to do the same. He wrote in the paragraphs in the March issue of the *Brother of India* for 1878:—

“The Turk refugees are in a lamentable state. From fifty to seventy thousand refugees—men, women and children—have rushed to Constantinople. These persons have been oppressed by hunger, thirst and the calamities of war, and hence driven by sheer misery to seek asylum in Constantinople. The accounts that we read of the terrible straits to which they have been reduced and extreme sufferings which they have faced are heart breaking. This is the time when men all over the world irrespective of caste, colour, creed or country should come forward to succour them by sending financial help. The Musilmans helped the Turks with millions when Turkey was engaged in war. But we

have to see how far the Musilmans help their co-religionists now that war with foreigners has ended. This is the time for expression of true sympathy and a spirit of true humanity."

This appeal was made by Bhagwan as early as in the year 1878. He felt deep pain that man should give even millions when he sees he can have havens in exchange or the joys of having fairies as a compensation, but become absolutely close fisted when he has no hope of exchange but that he has merely to respond to human misery. Sympathy for the sake of sympathy was and is almost a rare commodity. It is this psychic state which Bhagwan wished to see in mankind even then and in his later life. He made it a mission of his life to cultivate such noble feelings in the hearts of men along with weaning them from evils and sins and imparting to them the most precious light regarding their own inner being or soul or life-power.

Voice against the spirit of exchange in matters Religious.

It was in the year 1877 in the month of September that Bhagwan wrote in strong

terms against those Hindus and Musalmans who proved absolutely callous and irresponsible to the appeals made all over India for the famine stricken Madras. Commenting on the attitude of Masalmans, he wrote:—

“Somebody might say why it is that Musalmans as a body do not respond to the appeal for help? Do not Musalmans live in Madras? Are they not among the famine stricken? We say yes, Musalmans do inhabit Madras. We say Musalmans are also suffering the pangs of starvation. It is piety no doubt for a Muslim to help a Muslim brother in trouble. But he is wise. He knows that any monetary or other help to the Khalifa and Turks in war would get him greater piety and procure for him richer rewards in heavens. He would become *Ghazi* by such an act, when alive, and martyr when dead. He argues why he should sacrifice the great piety for an insignificant good that he does by helping famine stricken people. We have not read or heard that Musimans have contributed even a single pice towards famine relief fund. It is a pity that true sympathy.....is almost absent in our people.”

An appeal for an Arya Orphanage.

Bhagwan Dev Atma had no sympathy for the creed of the Arya Samaj and the policy of its Founder. Throughout his life, he protested vehemently against the wrong teachings and objectionable policy of Swami Dayanand. But Bhagwan could never withhold his appreciation and help for any good act done by any society and hence whole-heartedly supported it. In the columns of *Brother of India* for October 1878 Bhagwan published a long notice in the form of appeal for the opening of an Arya orphanage at Ferozepur with his introductory remarks which we briefly quote here:—

“In the columns of the *Arya Darpan* for the month of September, we read a notice that Lala Mathura Das, President Arya Samaj Ferozepur, has issued in the form of an appeal with the object of founding an orphanage there. This orphanage would bring up and educate such of the children who have no parents or guardians to take care of them, who are needy, helpless and vagrants and who instead of being brought

up by their own community or race, are being brought up and educated by alien communities or races. We are glad to see that our people have begun to awaken and feel the healthy throbs of patriotism. Before this, one orphanage has already been opened by the generosity and courage of Babu Navin Chandra Roy and it has completed one year of its existence. Its annual report is about to be published. We therefore very warmly publish an appeal by Lala Mathra Das and we hope that our readers would support it as an institution for the public good. We hope that this institution might serve as an inspiration to other persons to open similar institutions in their own localities, so that provisions may be made for housing, feeding and educating those utterly helpless, parentless, needy and miserable orphans, the very sight of whose plight melts any human soul into tears."

Beauty and necessity of feeling of Reverence.

Reverence is a higher force which enables its possessor to see the beauty and glory of higher life and noble feelings in others and

bend in homage to them and get an urge to possess such noble feeling at any sacrifice of lower powers or material possessions. This is one of the priceless possessions for every progressive human soul. Bhagwan Dev Atma evolved this beautiful force in himself to an extraordinary degree; and we find its expression in Bhagwan's writings and activities even in the seventies. In the July issue of "Brother of India" of 1875, Bhagwan wrote the following in the course of a long article on the races of India:—

"Out of four divisions of Hindus, the Brahmans enjoyed such a deep adoration, respect and reverence (which has continued upto to-day) because they were experts and well versed in the knowledge of all Shastras (which contained all about the customs, manners, conduct and religious practices etc. of Hindus). Many of these Brahmans of old unlike their present day generations lived their lives according to Shastric injunctions and considered it essential to fulfil all their duties. They were humble and simple. They taught religion to

others with a sweet and eloquent tongue. They were embodiment of charity and unselfish service. They were deadly opposed to low feelings of selfishness and show. They were inveterate enemies of *Hinsa* (or undue injury inflicted on others). They were self-controlled and full of forbearance."

"How glorious! If such persons were deeply honoured and respected, it was but natural. Who else could have been worthy of veneration and reverence if not they? Blessed were those Brahmans who possessed such beautiful traits of noble life."

This shows that of all other things the one thing that appealed most to Bhagwan's heart even in those days, was higher, noble and singularly serviceable life. It was something tangible, practicable, definable and extremely useful life for mankind. We find this admiration for noble life in its beautiful and impressive form in a long article which Bhagwan Dev Atma wrote on the passing away of a great and patriotic soul Pandit Bishnu Shastri in November issue of the "Brother of India" for 1876.

On the death of Pt. Bishnu Shastri, Editor of Indu Prakash, a leading paper of Bombay, Bhagwan Dev Atma wrote the above long article eulogizing his services in the cause of widow re-marriage, at the very outset of which he said:—

“The very memory of this great man’s name melts one’s heart. The perusal of his life-story brings tears to one’s eyes. We wish there were half a dozen more men like him who should have spent their lives in the welfare of this land with similar firm resolution and unshakable steadfastness. What a personality he was who did not budge an inch from his chosen path of service of mankind and who boldly faced untold sufferings and calamities in order to save thousands from their misery”.

“Indeed it is personalities like his who are said to have lived. Die we all must. Men die. Animals die. Birds and crawling creatures die. But all do not die the same kind of death. Moths, worms and others die and disappear altogether from the face of this earth as if they had never existed at

all. But those who die as our dear revered Pandit ji died, do not at all die in the ordinary sense. They live over again in the treasured memory of others. We wish such a fate—such a glorious death—to fall to the lot of every fortunate person. For such death leaves an eternal memory of the glorious dead in the records and memories of humanity.”

“Pandit Bishnu Shastri who passed away only a few days ago, was not only a great religious reformer, but he was a stalwart champion in the crusade against that most pernicious social evil custom of enforced widowhood which is but too well-known in this land, and he was one of those patriots who struck an axe at its roots.”

To see the beauty of any higher trait of life in any soul, in such a form, as to feel moved to tears and sing its glory in most spontaneous and flowing terms, shows the existence of the noble feeling of reverence. Reverence is a rare trait in mankind. To admire achievements of the worldly nature is given to many. But to see the beauty of the

feelings behind any good achievements and specially those of soul is given to a very few. If many of us had possessed that kind of reverence it would have been impossible that we could have remained contented with the absence of those noble traits in us. The eye of reverence which is to open the garden of higher world of feelings, has yet to be made and when this is made Nature will have taken another long leap in its march of evolution and the whole outlook of man's life would change. He would not feel proud of worldly achievements or even triumphs of intellect. He would feel, on the contrary, very humble if he has won those glories but is poor in higher feelings. He would measure his worth by the absence in him of the slavery to any low love or low hate and presence in him of any higher feeling.

The foundation of this new world has been laid by Bhagwan in his unique Society of the Dev Samaj, in the constitution whereof it is higher, nobler and altruistic nature which forms the basis of the entire gradations. Man is primarily valued in Dev Samaj for growth

in noble life and his wealth and intellectual growth are relegated a secondary place.

Bhagwan Dev Atma alone was fitted to give a new start to humanity towards a newer and higher stage of evolution.

Reverence for secret charity.

It was in the January issue of the "Brother of India" for 1878 that Bhagwan Dev Atma published a short editorial note which is very significant of Bhagwan's inner nature even at that period of his life. He wrote:—

"The true and the highest principle of charity consists in giving with the right hand in a way that even the left hand should not be aware of it. It was our impression that examples of persons following this great principle are rare Even in our own land we come across such inspiring cases. Only a few days ago, a gentleman sent in an envelope notes of Rs. 1200 to the address of the Dacca Deputy Commissioner for the relief of the famine stricken people. When the envelope was opened there was no name, address or

even indication of the sender. This is true charity."

Bhagwan Dev Atma throughout the career of his unique life discouraged vehemently every form of the spirit of bargain in charity. We know personally that when one of his sewaks put into a deed of gift to Dev Samaj, a specific condition that his name would be given to the institution, he was pleased to remark with pain "you insist on having a name—a behaviour which is not desirable. I am feeling ashamed of this spirit of bargain in you."

Expression of reverence for a generous-hearted lady.

We read in the same issue:—

"Maharani Shivan is unequalled in Bengal for her generosity. There is no work of India's progress or national welfare which she is not ever ready to help. She donated Rs. ten thousand towards the relief fund for the welfare of the famine stricken people in Madras. We hear again that she has contributed two thousand towards the expenses

that are to be incurred in preparing and submitting an all India memorial on the subject of I. C. S. before the British Parliament through Babu Surrendra Nath Bannerji."

Bhagwan never let any noble act pass unnoticed and without an expression of admiration on his part.

Admiration for Miss Collet.

The name of Miss Collet is very intimately associated with Brahmo movement. She has won a corner in the heart of India by her open advocacy of an Indian movement. There are people in India who treasure her name. Bhagwan Dev Atma also wrote in very appreciative terms in the columns of the "Brother of India" for April 1879 about her good and noble work while reviewing her Brahmo Year Book. He wrote:—

"We have on our table Brahmo year Book by Miss Collet. We are confident most of our readers must have heard of the name of Miss Collet. But we feel that it is necessary that Brahmos and other well-wishers of our land should know something about her life and activities. This lady has not visited

India; she has not therefore seen this land but merely on a map. But those well aware of her enormous efforts and great activities done in the cause of the moral and religious amelioration of our land, can form some estimate of her life and character. England is wonderful. If it possesses men who are perfect embodiments of Devil, it also possesses men who are nothing but angels personified. When Miss Collet came to hear about Brahmo Samaj, her interest in the movement was awakened to such an extent that she read all literature relating to Brahmo Samaj which she could lay her hands upon. She acquired such a deep and thorough understanding of the principles and history of the Brahmo Samaj, as is possessed by few even in the Brahmo Samaj itself. She was not content to keep to herself all the knowledge and light she got about Brahmo Samaj. But her awakened human feelings and her spirit of devotion led her to propagate, what she had got, to others in England by means of several books that she wrote. For the last three years, she has been regularly publishing a Brahmo Year Book. The book before us is the third of the series."

Reverence for Christian Missionaries.

The true feeling of reverence knows no bias or bigotry. If one possesses *Satwik Shradha* (true higher feeling of reverence), he would see the beauty of noble feelings wherever found. Bhagwan was never a Christian and he did not believe in Christ being son of God. But yet his heart was deeply moved even in seventies by the sacrifices of the Christian missionaries and he could not help expressing his reverence for them and creating the same feeling in others. He wrote:—

“The steadfastness of the Christian missionaries in the cause of their religion is admirable. In spite of the fact that the upshot (or net fruit) of the labours of thousands of missionaries who have been working in India for the past scores of years in order to convert it to Christian creed and of millions of rupees that have been spent in the venture, is very small, these people do not lose courage and go on thinking out newer and newer schemes to succeed in their mission.”

A glimpse of Bhagwan's inner feeling of reverence.

At page 277 of the “Brother of India” for

the year 1879, we catch a glimpse of how full, glorious and brilliant was the feeling of reverence in Bhagwan's heart even then. Bhagwan wrote some account of the life of Mr. Garrison. What he felt when reviewing that old gentleman's life is expressed as under:—

“To understand truth is one thing but to love it is quite another. There can be thousands who can understand and believe in any truth. But you can count on your fingers those who can sacrifice their very life out of love for it. Oh! how delighted, blessed and inspired we feel, when we come across incidents of the life of such lovers of the path of truth. Mr. Garrison died at the ripe age of 75, full of years and honours. He was an American. But he possessed life which would not only illumine the pages of American history but world history. He was a man whose teachings were full of noble thoughts. He was worshipper of truth (though in a particular line). He followed what was truth in that line. His conviction had led him to feel that there was no curse greater than trafficking in human slavery. It was seared on the tablet of his heart that those who keep slaves and deal in this

traffic of human beings as cattle, were void of all sense of humanity and were perfect beasts. These convictions so deeply overpowered him that he passed his entire life in the cause of the emancipation of slaves. He began his life as a cobbler. He then became a printer. Gradually he became proprietor of a press and paper in Balimon—the citadel of slavery. There he left no stone unturned in uprooting slavery. In the beginning as it happens the slave traders considered his efforts with supreme ridicule, as a bubble of water which would soon burst and vanish. But they gradually began to feel the might of his efforts and they saw with alarm that it was impossible, by any the worst blasts of opposition, to extinguish the flame that burned bright in Garrison's heart and which threatened to burn to ashes the entire edifice of slavery. Their fears came to be true. The institution of slavery received a severe knock. This brave man continued his great and glorious fight for many years so much so that those who were in the womb of their mother at the time he raised the flag, saw him faithful at his post even when they had grown

into young men and women. This fearless champion of a noble cause had no hesitation even in laying down his whole life in its defence. He considered it a good privilege to sacrifice even his life for it. But he lived to see his great dream of life realized and his endeavours bearing fruit. The very name of slavery was blotted out from that place. This is called living a life of man. *If life is of no substantial good to others and is passed like that of so many crawling creatures, it is an absolute waste.* May such a noble life of unselfish service in a noble cause fall to the lot of us all."

Was it possible for such a heart to remain tagged to any worldly cause? Never. And hence it did not remain so tied and was preparing to break out of all worldly or other restraints in order to wholly devote himself to his unique ideal which was gradually gaining full control over him.

Appreciation of the Blessings of British connection and Government.

Bhagwan Dev Atma possessed great regard for various national traits of character which the British had developed. He felt

deeply grateful to the British Government for strong orderly and comparatively good administration and the benefits of the enlightenment which they conferred on India. Bhagwan had witnessed days of mutiny and misrule. He compared those dark days with those of the British connection and by contrast considered their Government a great blessing. He also witnessed around him his own countrymen immersed in mental darkness, in abyssmal pits of false superstitious beliefs, in the mire of most pernicious social customs and above all in the most dangerous and disruptive communal hatred, and also void of those feelings of true sympathy, true service etc. which alone can lead to strong corporate existence. He found in the contact of the British a most stimulating cause which gave a great promise of spreading illumination, and awakening higher consciousness, spirit of reform in various departments of life and spirit of progress in commerce and industries etc. He was not unaware of the dark side of the British nation. In one place we have quoted his words where he wrote that while some people in England are devils incarnate, there are

others who are embodied angels. The Britisher has his dark side. But his bright side is also wonderfully bright. Appreciation of that wonderfully bright side is of the utmost need to our people and they will never lose by appreciating that.

Bhagwan wrote in his paper in the month of January 1876, more than half a century ago:—

“We are confident that no one would deny that British Regime has proved a unique blessing for us. But the question that naturally comes up into our mind, is, how far have we benefited by it? The public in general would undoubtedly endorse our opinion that our land has developed better polish and kind of civilized behaviour than before. But can this outward polish of manners and behaviour, in any way, be an index of the inner or soul-life? We say no. A deep reflection would make it clear that our people are void of that moral life in daily behaviour which is obligatory on man. The educated young men are greater sinners in this respect. We admit that English education has

liberated them from idol-worship. Their outward appearance is neat enough, but their inward life or soul is lying gross, dirty and dark, because of the absence of moral character and true religious life. It may be admitted that because of the spirit of freedom they do not feel in a mood to follow the old trodden lines of conduct. But there is true freedom—the blessings whereof are immense. The principles of this true freedom make up the warp and woof of the texture of British character. Those who consider freedom to consist in believing nothing, murder the very spirit of freedom.”

Bhagwan said further:—

“Freedom does not mean that one should do what one chooses. Liberty does not consist in giving full and free scope to our uncontrolled human desires and passions to have their way.”

By liberty we understand, freedom to exercise one's will only to the extent that nature has intended for us, and no king, governor or corporate body has any right to rob any individual of that much freedom. None should

be forced in matters of faith or in matters religious or physical which have direct reference to Nature. The English Government believes in Christ. But following the true principles of liberty it does not force us to accept Christ or Christian God or to believe in their theory of salvation as opposed to previous government which compelled people in matters of faith.....”

“We enjoy this liberty. And yet why is it that inspite of this age of freedom we are becoming degraded? So far inner life is concerned, our countrymen seem completely in dark. They seem absolutely ignorant of higher character. Apparently they possess two eyes which have opened to them the beauty and glory of external world. But inspite of these outward eyes, as souls they are stone blind. As an animal goes and preys upon others without in the least caring whether its act is right or wrong, in the same way man hunts after the material things without regard to the rightness or wrongness of his pursuit, and acts inspite of his possessing the capacity of having that discrimina-

tion. If we mould our lives on the pattern of animals acting without discrimination, we shall be said to have wasted our opportunities for growth in this atmosphere of freedom, and deprived ourselves of its blessings. If one awakens to this fact, he would count his life like that greatman who when asked what his age was, replied that his age was only few hours. He was in fact aged 80. At this his enquire asked him how it was that he considered his age to be only few hours when he looked eighty. He said in reply that he counted his age by how much he had spent in true devotion. The reply of the sage was quite significant. Every one of us ought to question himself how we have passed our lives. Have we passed them in..... doing all those acts which it is obligatory on us to do? If not, we are great sinners and we have lived in vain."

"This humble journal, "Brother of India", was not started with any sordid or selfish object of gain. Its principle object was and is to help man to live that true life which has relation to true religion and observance of

high principles of character, that decent life which is the one obligation on man. But when we remember that this paper has only 60 or 70 subscribers, we feel pain and shame for this attitude of man towards his own great good, and we gain a measure of our country's stage of growth. There is no doubt that there is a pretty large class of people who would be attracted to cheap novels, to sensational papers and spend hours in idle gossip and waste away large sums in immoral or undesirable pursuits. There is no dearth of persons ready to spend lavishly in the observance of false customs, usages and rites. There are countless people who live sensual lives, eat flesh, drink liquor and pass their time in questionable haunts. But seek and you will rarely find men determined to work on the principles of self-help, anxious to do any substantial service to their land and people and ever ready to help true servants of their country. Our journal is not a costly thing such as to be beyond the power of ordinary man to subscribe to. It is also not void of any uplifting articles on moral, religious and other useful topics. As against this, we feel certain that those who have got know-

ledge of and feel for the present condition of our land and the extent of its needs, would recommend every man, woman and child who has received the blessings of education to go in for this journal.”

In those days Bhagwan Dev Atma believed that a mythical person called God existed. But his God was like his own inner growing unique soul and embodiment of all truth and all goodness. It was his own self projected into his ideal, and given an embodiment.

At another place Bhagwan wrote:—

“A peep into our past history can show us that in no period of Hindu or Musalman rule or the reign of Marhattas and Sikhs, did we enjoy that freedom of thought, that peace and order, blessings of healthy and higher scientific knowledge and those opportunities to utilise our services for the good of others, as during the period of British regime A serious reflection would convince us about the condition of our people. Before the advent of the British, we had reached the lowest ebb in religious, social and moral life. The modern youth betrays still worse stage of the inner life.

SECTION II.

Bhagwan's war with the forces of untruth upto 1882.

We have upto now, dealt in the first section of this part with Bhagwan's unique activities upto the age of 32 in establishing the reign of goodness and destroying the reign of evil. We would now in this section give in the briefest possible terms Bhagwan's crusade against the reign of untruth and his activities to establish the glory of Truth. His principal adversaries were the three new off-shoots of Hinduism *viz.*, the Arya Samaj, the Brahmo Samaj and the Sikhs—all believers in one God without a second. We would first of all take up the Arya Samaj.



CHAPTER XIX



The Arya Samaj.



The Arya Samaj was founded in Bombay in 1875 and in Lahore in 1877 by Swami Dyanand Saraswati. It is a Society which has taken the greatest part in persecuting Bhagwan Dev Atma, because Bhagwan was the first person to detect and declare that the object of this Society was not religious. He saw with pain that belief in Vedas and other superstitions by the Hindus, was exploited by the promoters of Arya Samaj in order to serve secret political ends. This policy, being opposed to truth, shocked Bhagwan very much. The first glimpses of this policy, Bhagwan caught when Swami Dyanand knowingly proposed Rai Bhadur Dr. B. L. Ghosh, a confirmed Brahmo, and Bhagwan Dev Atma (also a Brahmo then) as President and Vice-President of his proposed Arya Samaj. This was a strange experience to

Bhagwan. Brahmos are dead opposed to the belief of Book revelation. And yet Swami Dayanand wanted these avowed opponents of Book revelations to be the highest functionaries of a society which had laid down belief in Vedic revelation as one of the cardinal principles. Bhagwan Dev Atma there and then declined to accept that office and to Swami Dayanand, "Panditji! how do you propose me as vice-president of a society which believes in Vedic revelation when I do not believe in it?" But to crown his policy Swami Sahib went to the length of appointing as the first President of his newly founded Society a man who not only did not at all believe in Vedic revelation, but who had a short time before, read a lecture on the non-existence of God. As a lover of truth, Bhagwan could not comprehend how any man dare come before the public in false feathers and espouse a cause in which he had no faith. This and other acts of Swami Dayanand set Bhagwan furiously thinking as to what could be the real motives behind Swami Dayanand's Vedic propaganda. And as the facts gradually dawned on his mind relating to the policy of Swami Dayanand, his love of truth received

the rudest shock and his repulsion for all untruth gave him no rest. Single-handed he raised his mighty voice against Swamiji's policy and teachings and thus incurred the severest persecutions, calumnies, abuses and vilifications at the hands of many of the Arya Samajists. This war continued upto the last and when Bhagwan Dev Atma passed away in 1929, it was an Arya editor who went to the meanest lengths in venting his spleen and disgorging the accumulated filth of his Vedic heart to ease his theistic Arya mind.

The question is "Was Bhagwan Dev Atma in the right or not when he declared that the object of the Arya Samaj was not religious but that it was political and that also of not any high order?" The time has most conclusively proved that he was perfectly in the right. *The Arya Samajists themselves have been compelled by circumstances to speak out, and their own confessions or admissions, some of which we will quote just now, show how futile it is for any single man or a body of men, however strong, to long suppress truth and long delude the world with untruth and how in the conflict between truth and untruth it is the latter*

that is bound in the long run to receive well-merited defeat. Bhawan Dev Atma has stood vindicated, and as time passes, the world will have better understanding of the nature of the war that Bhagwan Dev Atma waged against the policy and teachings of Arya Samaj and will form truer estimate of the character of those who took the most gruesome delight in horribly persecuting Bhagwan Dev Atma for his crusade against untruth.

Admissions by Lala Lajpat Rai—the hero of the Arya Samaj:

L. Lajpat Rai who was called by his admiring contrymen as lion of the Punjab, and whose services to Punjab and outside have been recognised in various ways, lived and died as one of the greatest disciples of Swami Dayanand and a staunch advocate of the Arya Samaj. His services to D. A. V. College are monumental. When the Non-Co-operation movement was started for the first time by Mr. Gandhi, L. Lajpat Rai threw himself body and soul in that great war and as a heroic follower of his society, he felt that the time had come when he and other

colleagues of his in the Arya Samaj should stand forth before the world as they were, and declare the true object of the Arya Samaj. He wrote an open letter to L. Hansraj, B. A. (called Mahatma by his own people) in the columns of the *Bande Matram* of 15th January 1921 urging upon him the need of making the D. A. V. College a national one and disaffiliating it from the University. He wrote:—

“The principles which Swami Dayanand preached and which the first leaders of the Arya Samaj impressed upon their young friends are being widely accepted now. Arya Samajists learnt principles of Swadeshi and Non-Co-operation from Swamiji” (i. e. Dayanand) long before Mahatma Gandhi’s coming in the field.

Again, in the Rishi number of ‘Prakash’ (an Arya paper of Lahore) dated 30th October 1921, L. Lajpat Rai contributed an article wherein he said:—

“The greatest pillar of the religious reform work of the Arya Samaj was the feeling of nationality.....Arya Samaj was founded in 1877 (in the Punjab). The present

principles of Arya Samaj were framed at Lahore. *In shaping them in the present form such men had a hand, as from the standpoint of Sanskrit learning and religious life, were mere zeroes. At that time such men also had a hand in its development as were not believers even in the religious doctrines of the Arya Samaj but who had full sympathy with the nationalist work of the Arya Samaj.*"

"Further in the constitution of the D. A. V. College and shaping the educational policy of the Arya Samaj *such men had supreme hand as had feelings of nationalism and patriotism far above their religious sentiments.*"

"In inculcating the study and teachings of Vedas and Shastras and their interpretations, the same feelings of nationalism predominated. *In fact superior kind of nationalism was the religion of the Arya Samaj.*" (Quoted in Jiwan Tattva, Lahore, dated 7th February 1922).

We invite special attention to the portions italicised by us and leave it to our readers.

to decide whether there was any justification for the Arya Samajists to persecute Bhagwan Dev Atma for what was a plain truth. Truth is mightier than men and it cannot but burst forth inspite of any attempts made to suppress it. In this case truth came out of the mouth of one of the greatest pillars of the Arya Samaj itself and thus vindicated Bhagwan's judgment against Arya Swami and his teachings. Bhagwan Dev Atma, the greatest lover of truth, left a burning and living instance for all, that they shall inevitably succeed who side with truth.

Again, in his own paper *Bande Matram*, dated 20th January 1921, Lala Lajpat Rai contributed an article headed, "The place of religion and politics in the Arya Samaj." In the course of that article, he said:—

"That no efforts were spared to keep the Dayanand School and College free from the control and inspection of Government and there was a time when biographies of Mazini and Garibaldi were included in the educational curriculum of Dayanand School.—"

"If the accounts of the Dayanand (Vedic) College are checked, it would be found that *not even one hundredth part of its total expenditure has gone to propagate the religious or Vedic teachings.*"

"In our opinion the condition of the country has now changed, *those things which were talked about formerly within closed doors are now openly declared in thoroughfares.*"

So the only sin of Bhagwan Dev Atma was that he had the insight to see and find out what these leaders of the Arya Samaj kept hidden from the world, though what he spoke out was nothing but truth. We would ask our friends in the opposite camp what is meant by hypocrisy? It is not a policy to show yourself what you are not? Is it a very noble trait? Is it a virtue? Is it not antagonistic to truth? How then do you dare to throw mud at one who tried to save you from this hypocrisy? Bhagwan Dev Atma was an uncompromising enemy of all that was antagonistic to truth and goodness. Hence though persecuted beyond measure, he did not yield an inch of ground so far his

warfare against hypocrisy, insincerity, falsehood etc., was concerned.

Now if we read between lines, we shall clearly see that Lala Lajpat Rai made the following very important admissions about Arya Samaj:—

1. That “superior (?) kind of nationalism was the religion of the Arya Samaj.” It means in plain terms that Arya Samaj had as its chief object politics and not religion.

2. That Swami Dayanand himself inculcated this primary object of Arya Samaj in the minds of his first adherents.

3. That “The principles (of Swadeshi and non-co-operation) which Swami Dayanand preached and which the first leaders of the Arya Samaj pressed upon their young friends are being widely accepted now.”

4. That they “were talked about formerly within closed doors.”

5. That the “present principles of Arya Samaj were framed at Lahore. “In shaping them in the present form such men had a

hand in it as from the stand-point of Sanskrit learning and religious life were mere zeroes”.

6. That “at that time such men had also a hand in its development as were not even believers in the religious doctrines of the Arya Samaj.”

7. That “in the constitution of D. A. V. College and shaping the educational policy of the Arya Samaj such men had supreme hand as had feelings of nationalism and patriotism far above their religious sentiments.”

8. That “if the accounts of Dayanand (D. A. V.) College are checked, not even one hundredth part of total expenditure has gone to propagate religious or Vedic teachings.”

9. That “in inculcating the study and teaching of Vedas and Shastras and *their interpretation* the same feeling of nationalism predominated.”

10. That “the greatest pillar of the religious reform work of the Arya Samaj was the feeling of nationalism.”

Now it is impossible to conceive that butchers would start cow protection society or that men disbelieving in Allah and the prophet would be given the chief reins of Islam or that those disbelieving in Lord God and the Son of God would be permitted to steer the barge of Christianity. If such men were placed in those positions by Musalmans or Christians one would be justified in saying that their object must be something other than religious. The principles of Arya Samaj were shaped by men who were zeroes so far religious life is concerned. *Such men developed Arya Samaj who did not believe in its religious principles.* And yet the Arya Samajists have the hardihood to assert that theirs is a religious society. All cry for Vedas and Sanskrit learning and all interpretations of Vedas were motived by political considerations though all these things were talked within closed doors.

How this policy corrupted the vital soul springs of Arya Samajists would be clear from one instance that we record here. In the year 1909 several leading Arya Samajists

were hauled up in Patiala on the charge of spreading disaffection against the Government. And the society about which it is now openly claimed that "Arya Samajists learnt principles of Swadeshi and Non-cooperation from Swamiji long before Mahatma Gandhi came in the field" showed a white feather. Mahatma Munshi Ram alias Swami Shradhanand said then in a public lecture which was published in the columns of the "Hindustan" newspaper of Lahore, dated 3rd December 1909 (now defunct) that Arya Samajists were not against the British Raj and that "anybody who wanted to create disturbance in this Raj in which he gets peace and comfort would not be an Arya Samajist." Further that Swami Dayanand had taught them that "if the British left India to-day, to-morrow our throats would be cut off."

While now the leaders openly declare that the politics forms the greatest pillar of the religious reform of the Arya Samaj and politics in fact formed the very religion of the Arya Samaj, Swami Shradhanand had the courage or temerity to absolutely deny that Arya Samaj had anything to do with

politics. While reporting the speech of one of the professors of his own Gurukula (Mr. Balkrishan M. A.), in the columns of his own paper "Sat Dharm Pracharak" dated 2nd March 1910, he wrote:—

"Shriman Balkrishan assured Dewan Sahib and the Government that just as Arya Samaj had engaged only in the religious and social work, *it will ever remain so in future and will not waste its powers in the delusive web of politics.*"

He wrote further:—

"What has Arya Samaj to do with politics? He could say with full confidence that Arya Samaj had nothing to do with politics. Arya Samaj was indebted to His Honour Sir Louis Dane and Dewan Sahib that they had given it consolation at the time of calamity."

The fear had then warped the minds even of the greatest Arya Samaj leaders. But when conditions changed, the same Swami Shradhanand said on the occasion of Dayanand's centenary at Mathura:—

"Veda does not allow politics to be separated from Dharma or religion."

“That none should call himself an Arya who does not wish to be politically free.”

“The Arya would rule over the whole world.”

“That Rishi Dayanand had taught non-co-operation with *adharmi* even if he be a Chakarvarty Raja.”

All this is a most interesting and instructive study of this society. An absolute enemy of all hypocrisy and falsehood could not but come in severe conflict with all those who believed in one thing and outwardly preached another, as he saw in all this, the death of the noblest springs of soul-life.

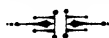
With this introduction let us advert to the life story of Bhagwan's fight with untruth in the Arya Samaj.



CHAPTER XX.



Bhagwan's greetings to Swamiji and his chivalrous defence.



Bhagwan Dev Atma was a leader of the Brahmo Samaj in 1877. He had won a corner in the hearts of his countrymen for his oratorical and journalistic powers. In all the public activities of the Punjab in the domains of religious, social and even political reform, he took the most prominent part. He conducted in those days an Urdu paper "Brother-i-Hind." As editor he received from Swami Dayanand two hand bills and he instantly wrote a review on them which is published on pages 62-63 of the February 1877 issue of his paper. It shows how in the beginning Bhagwan offered a hearty welcome to Dayanand's public activities and recommended him to the public support. Bhagwan wrote:—

“We have received two notices or hand bills from Swami Dayanand Saraswati. One contains the provisional principles which he has laid down for the promotion of various Arya Samajes which he means to establish. The second contains information about the publication from Benares of a monthly paper which would deal with original Ved Mantras and their commentaries in Sanskrit and Hindi. Uptil now Swamiji has completed commentary of ten thousand *Shalokas*. He is daily busy in that work. It is the object of Swamiji to publish all Vedic mantras through the vehicle of his monthly paper, so that it may be easy for men to read and understand. Swamiji wants to prove by these publications that Vedas do not teach idol-worship, or worship of any created object. What greater good news should the readers of Hindi and Sanskrit expect than this?.....We hope that Hindi knowing public of our land would welcome this great and good work or venture and would consider it as their sacred duty to help it. We tender our congratulations to the Swami for his noble example and courage, and with all our heart and soul we extend to him our best wishes for his success.”

It was in the month of April 1877 that the Brahmo leaders invited him to Lahore. How Bhagwan championed his cause can be evident from the following article which we find in the June issue of "Brother-i-Hind" for 1877:—

"Swami Dayanand left Ludhiana on the 19th April 1877 and arrived at Lahore the same day. He was lodged in the garden of Ratan Chand Dahriwala. The public was anxiously looking for his entry in Lahore. As soon as Swamiji set his foot in Lahore, numbers after numbers of men flocked to have his *Darshan*. The Brahmos were pleased very much to see him amidst them as the move to invite Swamiji to Lahore took its birth from them. For the first three or four days the audience congregated in that garden and listened to the debates and discussions of Swamiji. It was however proposed to arrange for some suitable place in the heart of the city where Swamiji might deliver his lectures for the good of the greater number of people. It was settled that the building known as Bawli Sahib may be fixed for Swamiji's lectures as it possessed both advantages of being com-

modious and situated in the heart of the city. This place was advertised as the place fixed for Swamiji's addresses. A very large audience assembled to listen to his first lecture on Vedas. But as it was widely known that Swamiji demolishes idol-worship, the orthodox people and specially Brahmans assumed at once an attitude of hostility to Swamiji. Hence in the very first meeting they created tumult and bustle and any amount of disturbance. If the promoters had not previously arranged for police all this would have ended in a big riot. Swamiji delivered one more lecture there."

"But as it was feared that some day rowdy element may kick up a row there and it was observed that lot of disturbance was caused there, it was deemed expedient to give up that place. It was decided to hold meetings in Brahmo Samaj Mandir. Swamiji delivered some lectures in that Mandir and perfect peace and order reigned there as was but expected. People heard Swamiji in all silence."

"During all this, the owner of the house in which Swamiji lodged—though a big man

and though he had himself agreed to accommodate Swamiji then—was influenced by others to such an extent that he asked Swamiji to vacate his house. The friends and admirers of Swamiji at once arranged for another house—a more commodious and better situated—for Swamiji's stay and he removed to the new quarters. This new house or bungalow belongs to our distinguished countryman Khan Bahadur Doctor Rahim Khan. One can form estimate of the generosity and large-heartedness of Doctor Sahib from the fact that though he is a Muslim, he very readily responded to the appeal made to him and in all willingness placed his bungalow at the disposal of Swamiji. The Swamiji shifted to the new bungalow. For this generosity of the Khan Bahadur, the hosts of Swamiji feel deeply indebted and it is hoped they will never forget this favour. The new bungalow is so spacious and its compound is so big that after his removing to it the Swamiji has been holding his meetings there instead of at Brahma Mandir.”

“In his new quarter Swamiji has led such a crusade against idolatry that it has caused

a ferment in the circle of the orthodox and the Brahmans. When the Brahmans saw that many a sheep was running away from their fold; they could not sit still. They held a meeting of the distinguished Pandits and invited Pandit Bhanu Dutt Sahib of *Sat Sabha*, Punjab. Pandit Bhanu Dutt is a preacher of a society which propagates the worship of incorporeal God and he is himself well-known for his antagonism to idolatry. When Swami Dayanand came to Lahore, Pandit Bhanu Dutt visited him frequently. All the Pandits of the committee took Pandit Bhanu Dutt to task for this. They charged him as being a follower of Dayanand, "You follow the creed of Swami Dayanand" they burst forth. This non-plussed the Pandit. In his bewildered state, he said, "Who says my creed corresponds to the creed of Swamiji. I believe as you believe, and if it be your pleasure that I should stand against Swami, I lay my services heart and soul at your feet." All the Pandits assembled there were heartily pleased to hear such an admission from the mouth of Pandit Bhanu Dutt and they appointed him as their Secre-

tary. When the educated friends and acquaintances of Pandit Bhanu Dutt received the news that the said Pandit had associated himself with a society whose main plank was establishment of idolatry and proving it on the authority of the Vedas, they felt shocked and surprised as they knew his personal beliefs but too well. We personally felt not only surprised but pained; for the Pandit has been often visiting us. In all his talk he had all along expressed his disbelief in idolatry. He one day told us that Swami Dayanand wanted him to be a missionary of his cause and remain with him and deliver lectures at various places and that he was himself a great admirer of Swamiji. "I am so much entangled in my home affairs" he said, "that though Swamiji undertakes to defray all my family expenses, I cannot muster courage to openly associate with him though I very strongly appreciate his mission."

"Our readers can form an estimate of Pandit Bhanu Dutt's character from all this and can understand the motives that have led him to join the assembly of the orthodox

Pandits. Pandit Bhanu Dutt from that day ceased all intercourse with Swamiji. Some days after hand bills were circulated that Pt. Bhanu Dutt would deliver a lecture in support of idolatry and prove it as sound on the authority of Vedas. Besides this, he has delivered two more lectures on the Hindu Gods and supported idol-worship."

From this it is evident how Bhagwan Dev Atma fought for Swamiji. But he had not as yet formed any definite opinion about him and his policy. Hence in the concluding portion of the article Bhagwan wrote:—

"But all such questions—as to what the teachings and principles of Swamiji are; what kind of reform work he expects to do in our land by his lectures in various places; how far his addresses are influencing or are capable of influencing the minds of the youths; how far his own beliefs correspond to or are opposed to Brahmo Samaj; how far has Swamiji succeeded in his matchless efforts and how far he would succeed in the end—we intend to deal with in our subsequent issues."



CHAPTER XXI.

Bhagwan's growing experience of Swamiji's life and teachings.

In the July 1877 issue of "Brother-i-Hind," Bhagwan Dev Atma wrote again a long article on "Swami Dayanand Saraswati and Ved." This article is illustrative of Bhagwan Dev Atma's own wonderful temperament. Though he appreciated enthusiastically some of the activities of the Swami and expressed his great regard for his learning, he was able in his unique light to read plainly the motives of the Swami behind his apparent religious fervour. *He very clearly discerned that it was expediency more than love of truth which animated Swamiji's all efforts and work.* As Bhagwan Dev Atma hated all kinds of policies.

which spelled sacrifice and death of truth, he could not but feel shocked at all this. Being a unique lover of truth it was impossible for him to sit with folded hands and let the truth be trampled upon. He knew he was at that time the only person who read the inner motives of the Swámiji behind his Vedic propaganda. He knew that many educated persons had grown enamoured of Swamiji's policy and teachings and they would fiercely resent any exposure of or even disagreement with him. Bhagwan knew the price he would have to pay for his loyalty to truth and he willingly offered it and stood ever ready to pay it. Bhagwan said:—

"In our May issue we had made a brief mention of Swamiji's entry in Lahore and the series of addresses that he delivered. We had given an undertaking too that in some subsequent issue, we would deal with the principles that Swami cherished, the subject matter of his various addresses, his policy and how far his beliefs corresponded to the principles of Brahmo Samaj and how far they went counter to them etc., etc. We advert in this issue to all these topics."

“Swamiji’s views are broad and they mostly tally with the advanced beliefs of the modern age. He seems to be very learned though his education is confined only to Sanskrit. His association with the enlightened English educated men has not only broadened his outlook and converted him into a truly learned and enlightened Pandit and has thus taken him out of the rut of the narrowmindedness and orthodoxy in which the Pandits of our land have almost invariably fallen, but in certain cases his views seem to be far in advance of those entertained by general English educated man. *Apparently he seems charged with fervour for national reform and love of his land though it is too early to form an exact estimate of his motives whether they are selfish and are based on self-interest or otherwise.* Experience alone would give us further data. Time alone is the great revealer. However we expect (according to our present knowledge of him) a good contribution to our national advance and reform from him.”

“So far religious reform is concerned, Swamiji seems an avowed enemy of idolatry. He has been labouring hard these days to destroy its root and branch. It would

not be improper if we call him one of the greatest Iconoclast. From this point of view his support to Brahmo cause which stands for pure monotheism and is anxious to remove all forms of idol-worship is heaven sent. He deserves as much praise at our hands for this as possible."

"Swamiji does not stand only for religious reform, but he seems bent upon removing from our land several social evils *viz.* child marriage etc. He is very anxious to promote the cause of female education and female emancipation. He believes that so long the woman of India is not educated and emancipated this land should expect no great advance. In short, the object of Swamiji's mission seems to be to remove ignorance and narrowmindedness, to propagate education, to bring about national unity and thus to bring about country's advance".

"After this brief review of his activities let us advert to his religious beliefs. Like several other persons Swamiji too is inclined to believe in revelation with this difference that while many other believers in book revelation, declare that God has revealed himself

besides Aryas to other nations also, and given them books, Swamji believes that the only book revelation that God made was Vedic revelation. According to him all knowledge is included in Vedas and the ultimate and fundamental teachings of all knowledge respecting steam, telegraph, railways etc., have been provided in Vedas by the all merciful God. All truth and all wisdom is found in Vedas. At the beginning of creation God couched in a few mantras the whole knowledge of Universe and its infinite truths. He has performed a miracle of confining the ocean in a pitcher. Thus Vedas are the encyclopædia of all truths and all sciences. Though one can carry the Vedas in one hand or pressed under one's arm—so light they are so far their weight is concerned—they are the repositories of the most precious treasures of all kinds of knowledge. Swamiji does not however claim to possess all knowledge of God-given truths but he expects that with the advance of time and progress of mankind the inner truths of Vedas would stand revealed in all their splendour."

"Swamiji has not however advanced any such reasons in support of this claim as can

stand the test of logic, higher criticism and facts, and which should be readily acceptable to the enlightened minds. Few arguments that he puts forward are those stereotyped ones which other believers in book revelations ordinarily give in support of their books. According to Swamiji, man's intellectual powers such as memory, imagination, thought etc., with which God Almighty has blessed him, do not in themselves possess any power to lead man to truth without the guidance of the God-given knowledge. Hence God felt the need of confining all His knowledge in a few mantras and revealed them to four Rishies. These four Rishies taught these to others and thus knowledge spread and men began to be learned and wise. This is the strongest argument which Swamiji has advanced to substantiate his claim about Vedic revelation. We leave it to such of our readers as are free from any bias or love of expediency, to judge for themselves what weight such an argument can have so far reason, facts, logic and higher criticism are concerned. We refrain at this stage from dealing with natural philosophy which is well-known

to those who know natural history. That history deals with all those principles which have led to the progress of man from primitive stage to the civilized condition. At some other time we mean to advert to the description and amplification of those laws of Nature which deal directly with the intellectual progress of man."

"We have a saying in English 'Habit is second nature.' It is this habit which is at the root of those myths and dogmas which mankind harbours. These myths and dogmas have no reason behind them or they would not be myths and they would cease to be dogmas. When any ideas become current and man begins to accept them for some time, he forms a bias for them and then clings to them without rhyme or reason. He transmits them to his progeny. Whether right or wrong they ordinarily hold such a vicious grip on man that he lives and dies cherishing them. The stories of hobgoblins and ghosts which grip the imagination of children, retain their fear even when they grow up to be men. Even when they come to realize that the fear of ghosts or hobgoblins is an

absurd fear, their hearts still retain the traces of it which manifests itself on hundreds of occasions. This is a weakness of human nature of which every man can have personal knowledge from his personal experiences. There is no race or nation on the surface of the earth which does not more or less cherish myths and dogmas. These myths and dogmas are so tenacious in their hold that they seem to possess the minds of even some of the most learned persons of all the lands. Though these learned people have lived all their lives dealing with logical truths and philosophic principles and thus have ventilated the chambers of mind with fresh air of higher criticism and thought, yet in matters religious they retain the poisonous vapours of myths and dogmas and declare their belief in things, which on the very face are absurd, illogical and childish and opposed to truth, and which excite laughter even from common people who are not obsessed by them. This is called human inconsistency. It betrays man very much. Wherever present, it leads man unconsciously into self-contradictions."

"This is the reason why a Hindu, who

has from his infancy been wedded to the belief in Vedic revelation, becomes in his youth so saturated with this dogma, that though he himself has never even seen Vedas and is absolutely innocent of the very characters of Sanskrit language, and all through his life he never gets any chance of reading or even hearing their verses, he very boldly proclaims that he knows that Vedas are revealed. He may be given very sound logical reasons against the very theory of revelations which a man of common sense can readily accept, and yet his biases blind him so utterly that though he possesses eyes he sees not. He is deaf and he is blind to those very apparent truths which explode the dogma of all kinds of book revelation and which form a touchstone for testing truth from untruth."

"This is the reason why educated and half-educated persons have very readily welcomed Swamiji's declaration in Vedic revelation. As Hindus they inherited the tendency to believe in Vedic revelation. In their surroundings during childhood they imbibed this belief. And when they saw a learned

Pandit preaching this dogma, they became strengthened in their belief. The biases leave man stranded and he loses the power of appreciating the voice of reason, facts and logic against his acquired and cherished beliefs and dogmas. This is the reason why even such persons are going forward to get their names enrolled in the list of believers in Vedic revelation who have never studied them, nay, who have never known in their lives even Sanskrit characters. They believe because Swamiji says so”.

“There are some persons among those who have given their names in the list, who do not at all believe in book revelation but who make outward profession in it as a matter of policy. But we cannot consider them immune from the charge of hypocrisy merely because expediency or diplomacy is considered by a man in general as indispensable in politics and by some as indispensable also in religion.”

“In the first place we do not consider recourse to expediency or hypocrisy as legitimate even in politics, and we believe that with the progress of time this evil would

stand discredited. In the second place all know that expediency or hypocrisy is fatal to religion. Then how can you call them religious who favour or follow hypocrisy or expediency in religion? Does man think that God's kingdom is like man's kingdom, where too, without adopting crooked policy one can never succeed to enter? We trow not. If you accept religion for its own sake, then you must consider your good here and hereafter to lie not in defending or pursuing the wrong policy of expediency but in rooting it out completely and for ever."

"We deplore the fact that even Swamiji appears wedded to this wrong policy of expediency. If it were not so, how was it possible for such a learned and enlightened man as Swamiji to have declared all old commentaries on Vedas wrong, to have pronounced even the translations of Vedas made by modern scholars absurd and to have given an altogether new and forced interpretation to Vedic Mantras to suit the modern needs? Is it not true that such an attempt of Swamiji would be like adorning an old Hindu woman—toothless and sightless, worn out and all wrinkled and with almost both

feet in grave—in modern most Parisian fashion, and sending her to attend the ball given by the Viceroy and exposing her in the dazzling lights to the laughter and ridicule of the young civilians and officers? Would she be considered a beautiful lady because she is dressed in modern fashion? Would she not be hooted as an old hag? By misinterpreting the Vedic Mantras, divorcing them from the natural interpretations as the thoughts of the primitive men and by so distorting them as to give out, that they possess the modern western cultivated thoughts and sciences, Swamiji has proved the truth of the above illustration. In making new Vedas out of the old, he does not all at once give up the ordinary interpretation of the words like fire and air, but in his Rig Veda he has given double meaning to them. The one which is old and the other which he wants to use. Thus he says that fire and air refer to God, and hence prayers to fire and air according to him are nothing but prayers addressed to One God. Thus in the first interpretation, he called fire and air as material and changeable, but in the second he calls them immaterial and

unchangeable. We wonder how Swamiji makes bold to reconcile two altogether antagonistic and mutually contradictory interpretations of the word and thus violates all the principles of logic and natural philosophy. Our astonishment knows no bound when we see many educated men most credulously taking up the cry of Swamiji and with eyes blindfolded by the veil of biases and dogmas, thoughtlessly declaring that whatever Swamiji says and writes is truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth."

"It is a war cry of the lovers of truth that when a man sees truth being massacred by untruth and he does not bestir himself to stand in defence of the truth, he thereby exposes himself to the charge of a murderer. Hence though the lovers of expediency may feel offended at the voice that we have raised against it, we feel we cannot sit with folded hands when truth is being sacrificed".

And Bhagwan concluded the article by some quotations of Vedic Mantras to show how far belief in revelation had any legs to stand upon.

CHAPTER XXIII.

**Bhagwan Dev Atma's views endorsed
by great scholars.**

After the conclusion of his article quoted by us in the last chapter, Bhagwan made his position quite clear. He declared in the most unequivocal terms that it was impossible for him to sit silent and watch as a spectator the merciless sacrifice of truth at the altar of expediency. This meant war between two opposed and conflicting forces. On the one side was Bhagwan Dev Atma, the ardent lover of truth wedded to it under all circumstances and on the other was a movement which was mainly political but appeared in religious garb, in order to catch the hearts of those wedded to the superstitious belief of Vedic revelation. It was a movement whose principles were laid out by men who "from the stand-point of Sanskrit learning and religious life were mere zeroes" and who even did not believe in the religious principles of the Arya Samaj. This movement owed its

development to such persons who did neither believe in God nor in Vedic revelation. Swami Dayanand interpreted Vedic Mantras to suit, as is admitted by veteran Arya Samajists, his hidden object. A learned writer once remarked, "When one turns to the Vedic hymns themselves and to his (*i. e.* Dayanand's) interpretation of them, it becomes exceedingly difficult to believe in his straightforwardness and sincerity! One can hardly imagine any learned mind believing what he (Dayanand) says."

Several distinguished Sanskrit scholars—both Indian and European—expressed this emphatically that Dayanand's interpretation of Vedas was not genuine. For instance :—

Opinion of Prof. Max Muller.

Prof. Max Muller whom Sir George Birdwood calls as "the pride of two great nations, the German and the English, and the great Rishi of the whole Indian race," wrote a letter to a great philanthropist of Bombay, the late Mr. Malabari dated Oxford, February the 2nd 1882, in which while explaining the purpose of translations of his famous Hibbert lectures, he incid-

entally referred to the interpretation of Vedas by Swami Dayanand as follows:—

“ As I told you on a former occasion my thoughts while writing these lectures were far more frequently with the people of India than with my audience in Westminster Abbey. I wanted to tell those few at least, whom I might hope to reach in English, what the true historical value of their ancient religion is, as looked upon, not from an exclusively European or Christian, but from a historical point of view. I wish to warn them against two dangers, that of undervaluing or despising the ancient national religion, as is done so often by your half Europeanised youths, and that of over-valuing it and interpreting it, as it was never meant to be interpreted—of which you may see a painful instance in Dayanand Saraswati’s labours on the Vedas. Accept the Vedas as an ancient historical document, containing thoughts in accordance with the character of an ancient and simple-minded race of men, and you will be able to admire it and to retain some of it, particularly the teach-

ings of Upanishadas even in these modern days. But discover in it steam engines, and electricity and European philosophy and morality, and you deprive it of its true character, you destroy its real value, and you break the historical continuity that ought to bind present to the past." (*Vide* Life of Malabari by Dewan Dayaram, page LXXXI.)

**Opinion of Dr. H. D. Griswold M. A.,
Sanskrit Scholar and Principal
F. C. College.**

Dr. H. D. Griswold M. A., a retired Principal of the Foreman Christian College, Lahore, and a Sanskrit Scholar, published an ably written pamphlet in 1897, named "Dayanandi interpretation of the word Deva in Rig Veda." He pointed out therein that the correct interpretation of ancient scriptures "does not mean putting in ones own thoughts but rather the leading out of the author's thoughts." Hence he said "due regard must be paid (1) to the etymology of the word, (2) to contemporary usage, (3) to the context when the word has more than one possible meaning."

He complained that Dayanand laid "great emphasis on the etymology" even when it does not tally with "actual Vedic usage." (P. 20). For instance, while the great Vedic commentator Yaska calls देव व्यतथन *i. e.* Deva as a heaven dweller and says योदेवः देवता (P. 3) *i. e.* Deva means a Devta and this meaning (*i. e.*, God) satisfies the context of every passage in the Rig Veda (p. 22); Dayanand makes it to mean "learned men," "excellent organs of sense," "excellent seasons," "excellent qualities of knowledge," "excellent pleasures," "excellent things" etc., etc. (P. 11).

Thus

"In a high dictatorial fashion, he (Dayanand) assigns to the word Deva whatever meanings suit his purpose! This is not exegesis, the drawing out of the meaning in a passage but rather negesis, if I may be allowed to coin the word *i. e.* reading into the passage of the meaning which one desires to get out of it."

Again he observes that

"Due regard must be paid to the grammatical construction of the words *i. e.* a

nominative must be taken as nominative, vocative as vocative, an imperatative as an imperative and indicative as indicative, an active as an active, a second person as a second person, a third as a third person etc. This canon too is perfectly clear and self-evident." (P. 6).

After examining the translation of a few Vedic Mantras, the learned Professor observes:—

"But the most remarkable thing . . . is that in the few passages considered, no less than 10 imperatives are interpreted absolutely as nominatives. What is this but trifling with the text of Vedas. To write अत्रग्यत्यय; or लङ्येलोप *i. e.* there is an irregularity here or the imperative is used in the sense of the indicative, without giving a particle of proof, is no better than to call white black, because it suits one's purpose so to do. Such interpretation or rather misinterpretation is nothing less than vicious.

At page 23, he starts a question:—

"The question arises inevitably:—"Was he honest in explaining the Rig Veda in this

way? One is strangely tempted at times to answer in the negative.”

**Opinion of Pandit Navin Chandra Roy, former
Principal of Oriental College, Lahore.**

Pt. Navin Chandra Roy—then Fellow of the Punjab University and Principal of Oriental College, Lahore—was well-known in his time for utmost integrity of character and straightforwardness. He won the esteem of all those who ever came in contact with him. In his letter to the Founder of Dev Samaj, Bhagwan Dev Atma, dated 13th May 1890, he wrote:—

“Now in reply to your further questions, I can only say as clearly and precisely as I can, that it is a great puzzle to me, how a Sanskrit Scholar and earnest reformer like Pandit Dayanand Saraswati interpreted the Vedas in the manner he did. There are however only two alternatives *viz.* either he was self-deluded or he cared more to carry out his policy than for truth.”

**Opinion of Pandit Mahesh Chandra Niaya Ratan
C. I. E., Principal, Sanskrit College, Calcutta.**

Maha Mahopadhyaya Pandit Mahesh

Chandra Niaya Ratan, C.I.E., then Principal of Sanskrit College, Calcutta, in his letter to Bhagwan Dev Atma dated 26th April 1890, wrote as follows:—

“As to the second question you have put me, whether in my opinion a Sanskrit Scholar like Pandit Dayanand Saraswati could sincerely interpret the Vedas as he has done, I have to say as follows:—In my opinion, and I may be wrong, he could not have been sincere. I have conversed with him and from his writings I was convinced with the whole world that he was possessed of intellect of the highest order, and such a person could not, I believe, have fallen into so grave an error as to believe sincerely what he wrote about the Vedas. I believe that his interpretation of the Vedas was intended by him to be an ingenious trick to show the stretch of human brain and thereby to increase his fame. But I do not think he believed in what interpretation he put.”

**Opinion of Pt. Shanker Pandurang, M. A.,
a great Sanskrit Scholar of Bombay Presidency.**

Pandit Shanker Pandurang, M. A., a great and reputed Sanskrit Scholar of the

Bombay Presidency, late Oriental Translator of the Bombay Government, translator of the Rig Veda in Marhatti and English and for some time Prime Minister of one of the States in the Presidency, wrote a very remarkable and long letter on the policy that underlay Pandit Dayanand's Vedic interpretation. He wrote:—

“I do not believe that he had himself faith in the correctness of the translations which he made of the Vedas. Nor do I believe that he could have very much faith in the Vedic samahita as a divine revelation, though I am sure he must have believed honestly in the good which the maintenance of the long established authority of the Veda was calculated to produce if rightly directed.”

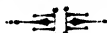
“I have no sympathy whatever with his interpretations of his Vedic texts, because I believe those interpretations are fundamentally wrong and entirely unreliable in as much as they are made to suit foregone conclusions. He translated the Vedas not as it was but as he wished it to be.”

In the August issue of the "Brother of India" for 1877, Bhagwan Dev Atma gave opinions of several eminent Sanskrit Scholars who unanimously condemned Swamiji's interpretation of Vedas as insincere during Swamiji's own life-time. They included that of Principal Griffith of Benaras Sanskrit College, Principal Tony M. A. of Presidency College Calcutta, Pandit Rishi Kesh Bhattacharya of Oriental College, Lahore, and Pandit Bhagwan Das of Government College, Lahore.

CHAPTER XX.



Professions and Practices in the Arya Samaj.



Bhagwan Dev Atma never in his own life divorced professions from practices. What ever he believed, he proved to be true to it by his every day life. He illustrated in his daily behaviour that he loved truth for its own sake. It was a matter of supreme indifference to him, how the world looked at him with favour or frown, when he unfurled the banner of any truth that dawned on him in his growing light. It therefore considerably shocked him when he saw any person standing pledged before the world to certain reform and yet violating the very reform at the first hour of temptation. The Arya Samaj as a Society declared itself as an exponent of social and religious reform. And yet its President at Lahore went down with a crash when the time for trial came. He had to marry. He was associated with a Society (Arya Samaj) which openly preached against child

marriage and all idolatrous rites and ceremonies. And yet he entered into wedlock with a girl aged hardly 8 or 9 years. She was betrothed already to some other person. But this President arranged for the dissolution of that engagement and himself married her by Brahmanical rites which he had the effrontery to denounce from public platform. He or his Samajic friends gave a flattering unction to their heart that time was not ripe for putting into practice the reforms they advocated and instead of acknowledging their weakness and feeling ashamed of disloyalty to the cause they stood for, they considered, it a sensible policy not to take any step which threatened to create public opposition. All this was painful to the lover of truth and goodness—Bhagwan Dev Atma—and when he saw evil riding rough shod on goodness, he cast to winds all considerations of self and plunged into a furious war with the organised forces of expediency and falsehood. We quote below from the October issue of “Brother of India” for 1877 the dialogue which would show how the Arya Samaj enrolled members in the beginning

and how practices were divorced from professions in it:—

**Conversation of some persons on the Arya
Samaj matters.**

Brahmo Samajist—Yes friend! where are you coming from?

Arya Samajist—I am just now returning from Samaj.

B.—Any fresh news or development of the Arya Samaj?

A.—You know more than I. Why do you then enquire from me.

B.—You seem mistaken. You are a member of Arya Samaj. How is it possible for me to know more of it than you?

A.—(Smiled and said.) What! Is it hidden from you that like many others I am also a member not by choice but by force? So far as the inner working of the Samaj is concerned and its principles go and so far as the daily practices of its members are seen, all is an open secret.

B.—Can you tell me how you have become a member not by choice but under pressure?

A.—Strange! you do not know how these two or four hundred members have been enrolled on the list of Arya Samaj. The leading members of the Arya Samaj have made it a daily duty of their life to visit persons in their houses. The person visited tells them openly that he has no faith in their creed and is not prepared to put into practice their principles. But they tell him not to have any scruples about belief and practices. He could believe whatever he liked and do whatever he wished. All that they wanted was that he should permit them to put his name in the list of members as that would raise the dignity and prestige of the Samaj. This talk silences some and from some weak souls wrings a reply "allright." Both such souls are admitted at once as members. You can tell me now, is all this voluntary or done under pressure?

A spectator—I endorse all that you say. I have personal experience of this.

One day some leading Samajists came to my house also, and asked me to become a member of the Arya Samaj. I told them to excuse me as I had no faith in their principles, and as an honest man I could not associate myself as a member of such a Society with the principles of which I had no sympathy.

One from the public.—I also endorse all this. Once these persons offered me to hold an office in Samaj when I did not believe in their principles. But I definitely declined the offer.

B.—Mr. Arya Samajist, you have given us some insight into the *modus operandi* of the Samaj so far as the enlisting of members for Samaj is concerned. But please tell us something about their life and practices. According to a Persian proverb when two hearts unite they can move a mountain. Now that you have some hundreds as members they must have done something very substantial in eliminating social evils and introducing practical reforms?

A.—What do you mean? Do you take Arya Samaj for a that you expect all reforms at once?

B.—I do not understand you? Can you make yourself clear?

A.—I am sufficiently clear. The..... has become very unpopular in society because of its practical reforms so much so that people are afraid of associating with it. Do you want that the members of the Arya Samaj like those of the..... Samaj should break caste bonds, abolish child marriage and introduce adult marriages, remove all superstitions attached to *Shradh*, do away with idols, stop giving gifts to undeserving Brahmans and thus get a bad name in the public?

B.—Please Sir, if the Arya Samaj does not intend to introduce reforms why is it established at all? What good does it do?

A.—It is expected to do as much good as other societies which have been established as religious sects—no more no less. But one great good that Arya Samaj is out to herald in this world is that every Sunday besides prayers, even lectures are delivered in which speeches are made against the current social evils.

B.—You think Hindu society does not groan under social evils?

A.—It does and the_____Samaj is exterpating the social evils of Hindus. Our Swamiji Maharaj is also speaking against them.

B.—If so, why do you denounce_____Samaj people for laying an axe at the root of evils which your Swamiji also condemns?

A.—I do not condemn all members but only such who break some of our national customs.

B.—Do you mean by “national customs” caste system, child marriage, etc?

A.—Yes.

B.—Then is it not manly to remove those degrading customs? Does not your own Swami speak against them? Is it right and proper to condemn people for such noble acts? Is it consistent with humanity to withhold admiration from them for doing these laudable things?

A.—I do not say that such reformers deserve blame. But the world does look askance at them.

B.—Do not talk of common people. They do not spare your Swami too. Some call him *kirani* (Christian). Some call him spy of Christian Missionaries. Some call him even atheist. Even Arya Samaj members are not spared. When any member passes, people point their finger at him and say, "there goes Dayanandi."

A.—That does not matter much. So long we confine ourselves merely to professions people do not get so indignant as when they would if we translated them into deeds. We talk of certain customs as evil. But we do not outrage the public by breaking such customs. From the time that our Samaj has been founded, we have not set one practical instance of reform and thus by deeds we have not shown that we are enemies of current customs.

One from the public —Yes, yes, our friend is perfectly in the right. We have ourselves come across some cases in which the leading members of the Arya Samaj have bent in homage to the current customs and thus caused no sensation in the orthodox

circles. I am going to give you a unique instance of this (slavish) submission to current customs which would amply corroborate the statement of our friend, the Arya.

B.—Please tell us that.

A.—Yes, I am going to narrate it. You know our President of the Arya Samaj.

B.—Yes, we know him. He is Lala with whose name is appended the title “Afzal-ul-Ulma.”

A.—Yes, he is the very man. He himself—this important dignitary—has very recently celebrated his *own* marriage with a girl hardly aged 8 or 9. This slip of a girl is absolutely innocent of what is meant by marriage. She does not know what is meant by husband. But because Lalaji was anxious not to go against the current orthodox customs, he went to the extent of having for his wife a minor girl who was already betrothed to another person. He arranged through one or two friends of his to have her first engagement broken and the marriage was celebrated secretly in a friend's house. Thereafter, he

announced his marriage by having festive celebrations.

B.—Strange! What an illustration of reform by the President of Arya Samaj! But Swamiji has declared a marriage of this kind to be wrong. In his Sattiyarth Parkash, while discoursing on marriage, he has proved that marriage with a girl of 8 or 9 is opposed to the will of God as shown in Vedas. But why did Lalaji go against the dictates of God-revealed Vedas and bend his heart in homage to *Puranas* of Brahmanas which Arya Samaj condemns? How can those who are themselves misguided lead others to the right path?

A.—You seem to be very fond of consistency in conduct. You want word and deed to harmonise. Your surprise would know no bounds when I tell you the rites and ceremonies which Lalaji had to pass through in his marriage.

B.—Yes kindly tell us that also.

A.—Not only the marriage itself was a child marriage, but no reform of any kind was introduced in the marriage ceremonies.

and rites. Like orthodox marriages Brahmans were called to celebrate it.

B.—The orthodox marriages are performed by idolatrous rites. Is it not so?

A.—Yes, idolatrous rites were observed. When one had to perform child marriage why to scruple at these rites.

B.—Strange ! Is this what you people mean consistency with principle? If the President tramples down the principles of the Samaj why would members respect them? Where is the need of publishing in glowing colours the ten principles of the Arya Samaj? Is it not meant that one should abide by them? These principles demand that worship of one incorporeal God alone is right and in case of a conflict between truth and untruth the untruth is to be at once sacrificed. The Arya Samaj declares that all true teachings are given in Vedas. Do Vedas permit marriage with a girl of 8 or 9 years? Do they teach homage to idols? Do they teach breaking of engagements for no reason? All these things are not only opposed to religion and morality but even reason and common sense. These per-

sons therefore who, led by sordid selfish motives, murder all higher principles, not only become thereby guilty of a grave wrong but throw hundreds of persons who imitate their life into the vortex of wrong. Such examples are a great misfortune for our race and country, specially when they are set by persons who are expected by our motherland to give better account of themselves. Mother India expects that her worthy sons would rise, heal up her wounds, dry her tears and rescue her from the demon of evil customs. But instead of doing that these sons are led by their selfishness, unmanliness and cowardice aggravate her wrongs and lacerate her heart. With hair dishevelled and tears streaming out of her eyes, mother India laments the lot of these ungrateful sons in most piteous tones.”

Here the *Syapa* is published which we would recommend our readers to read in original in Urdu.

In our own time, we have come to know more about this President of the Arya Samaj from the mouth of the distinguished Arya Samajists themselves than given above and it proves to the hilt that Swami Dayanand did

not care at all for honesty or sincerity of beliefs and convictions in enlisting members for his Samaj. Bhagwan Dev Atma had in the very seventies read Arya Samaj aright and his love of truth and sincerity received the severest shocks by their merciless sacrifice at the altar of expediency.

Principal Ram Dev B.A., late of Gurukul Kangri of Arya Samaj wrote as follows in "Prakash," Lahore, a leading paper of the Arya Samaj, dated 13th June 1920:—

"I wonder why you do not raise a voice of protest against those *khanazad* (home bred) enemies who live and move in the Samaj in spite of their disbelief in Vedic revelation and thus eat into its vitals like septic germs.....People go to them thinking them to be Arya Samajists, but when they return after visiting them they find their faith shaken. If these people were open foes, other people (*i. e.* unsuspecting Arya Samajists) would not fall into their trap."

"There are several such men and two among them have admitted to me that they

do not believe in Vedas as God-revealed and even then they continue as members of the Samaj. One of them is Rai Bahadur..... M. A., who himself told me that not only now but never before had he believed them as revelation. He even said further that he had tried to influence Rishi Dayanand to abrogate the 3rd article of faith in Arya Samaj, which imposed such a condition so that even disbelievers in Vedic revelation could enter Arya Samaj, but Rishiji was not caught in the trap. The wonder is that this Mahashai has been inspite of his disbelief (in Vedic revelation) continuing for years as a member of the Samaj."

Is it not more astonishing that Dayanand himself knowing Rai Bahadur's disbelief, not only appointed him as the first President of the Arya Samaj but even the Vice-President of that All India big body, called *Paropkarni Sabha*, which he appointed by his last will to carry on his Vedic propaganda after his death? Is this conduct consistent with honesty? Had not then belief in Vedic revelation been made a principle merely as a matter of policy?

Let us quote another Arya Samaj preacher, a graduate whose evidence still further and conclusively proved the above facts. Pt. Parmanand B. A., Arya Updeshak, wrote in the Arya paper *Prakash* of Lahore, dated 28th Asauj, Sambat 1980 Bikrimi:—

“The danger which troubles me today has been felt as such by the best leaders of the Arya Samaj since its very start. Unfortunately since the establishment of the Arya Samaj there exists a school of thought (*Vichar Dal*) which considers and accepts Arya Samaj to be only a reforming society of Hindus and now *to add to our misfortune the members of this school are on the increase.... It is needless for me to state that since the early days of Arya Samaj, the cry was constantly dinned into our ears that Maharishi Dayanand himself had put in the belief in Vedic revelation in the principles of Arya Samaj simply with the object of uniting the Arya nation in one bond. This dose (ghutti) was administered with great success by Rai Mulraj (i. e. the first President—Pub.) and his companions.*” (*Italics are ours.*)

CHAPTER XXV.

The nature of the propaganda started by Arya Samajists against Bhagwan Dev Atma.

What Bhagwan read in the activities of the Arya Samaj was nothing but truth. But it was this truth which the early Aryas and their successors never wanted to be disclosed. Arya Samaj was and is mainly a political body. But it has always resented even the just exposure of its life and activities. Instead of meeting the arguments and facts of Bhagwan Dev Atma several leading Arya Samajists have indulged either in *argumentum ad-Hominum* and even showed clear tendency of sometimes *argumentum ad Baculum*. These are always the weapons of the losing party. We just quote here one instance of how the start was made of writing false things against Bhagwan Dev Atma. We find in the October issue of "Brather-i-Hind" for 1877 the following under the title of "Bawa Narain Singh, Pleader of Amritsar and 'Brather-i-Hind':—

“Bawa Narain Singh, Pleader, Amritsar, has contributed an article in “Vakil Hindustan,” dated 14th September on Vedas. In the course of his article, the Bawa has written something about the article which appeared in the July issue of our journal under the heading “Swami Dayanand and Ved”. We find nothing except bosh in this article which may be called a reasonable reply to any of ourobjections and about which we may again try to convince him by arguments. He writes in the start, that it is regrettable as to why we should call ourselves Agnihotri when we do not believe in Vedas. We enquire from our unbiased readers as to which of our arguments, is the above fact advanced as a reply. If this is his logic and such his reply, he must indeed be a very successful lawyer in winning the cases of his clients.”

“Again he writes with his usual vigour that it is regrettable that we have shown a white feather like some persons in army who make an advance in all other things save when engaging in actual battle is concerned. When Swamiji was at Lahore, he invited us

to a discussion on Vedas but we slunk away. Upto now we have not, for certain reasons, made public what took place between Swamiji and ourselves about debate on Vedas. But these lines of Bawa Sahib have compelled us to make a reply for his and our reader's information. We assure Bawa Sahib that we were born in U. P. and the people of that province too well known for their valour and courage in fighting. *When Swamiji was here at Lahore, we ourselves invited Swamiji to a debate and offered to him to appoint four judges—two from his side and two from ours—to give their verdict on our debate. But Swami declined definitely and did not agree to have judges. Even a man with ordinary common sense can understand the cogency of having judges in a matter where two persons—one of whom may be in the right and another in the wrong—enter into a debate on a common issue. This fact is known to hundreds of people as all this talk of ours took place in a big congregation."*

"Besides this, we value war of pen better than oral debate. This is firstly because written debates have a lasting value and

again oral debate can benefit only those few who attend it, while written debate can reach the largest public which is absent. *We had therefore invited Swamiji at first to enter with us into written debate. But he definitely declined even to do so on the plea that he had no time for that.* We ask our pleader friend to point out in all this, where we showed a white feather. If our pleader friend only thinks awhile even now, he would realize that in the field of knowledge no other war is more efficient than the war of pen, for the latter is more effective than the oral war for the obvious reason that in writing one's hands are bound down. Even now if our pleader friend desires to enter into this war of pen in which we are engaged, we are always ready for it."

"Again our pleader friend writes that we do not know how Vedas were revealed, as if our friend himself knows all about their revelation. To show his knowledge in this respect he writes a sentence that before the actual revelation took place it was written in the preface, Ved Vyas, that every Veda went after that Rishi's name to whom its knowledge

was revealed and that we should satisfy ourselves by a reference to Swami Dayanand's Ved Bhash. We ask our friend about this also as to whence he got the knowledge that preface Ved Vyas was in existence before Vedas were revealed. His Swami writes in "Rig Ved Adi Bhash Bhumika," number 1 page 20 that Vedas existed with Brahma etc. even before Rishies Merchi etc., and Munies Biyas etc., took their birth. That is, according to our friend—the pleader, the preface (*Dibacha*) written by Biyas existed before Vedas came into existence, in which it is stated that the Vedic knowledge that has been revealed through any Rishi stands in that Rishi's name. But his Swami says that Biyas was not even born when Vedas were revealed. We want to know who among both of them is to be trusted more, Swami or his disciple the Bawa. Does on the basis of such knowledge our friend recommend us to read the Veda Bhash of Swami Dayanand Saraswati?"

"In the end the Bawa has the courage to write one sentence within inverted commas showing that it was been written by

us and then indulges in comments on it. That sentence is, "If Vedas are the revelation of God, why do they contain praise of God." We at once repeat the saying that no lie is blacker than the one spoken in the very presence of a man about whom it is spoken. Then we invite our pleader friend to point out to us the page of any of our articles in any issue of our paper in which we have written that sentence. If he fails to do so, as he is bound to fail, since we never wrote that sentence, we appeal to him to desist from writing such nonsense in future, specially in print, because the pleader's ways are not equally successful at all places."

This is in fact, a mere sample of the opposition, that many Arya Samajists launched against Bhagwan Dev Atma, and which assumed hideous proportions, as time went on, and to which we hope to advert in our subsequent parts, when dealing with the persecutions of Bhagwan-Dev Atma by worshippers of one God without a second.

CHAPTER XXIX.

The Brahmo Samaj.

Bhagwan Dev Atma's love of truth and goodness and hatred for all that was antagonistic to truth and goodness had already compelled him to enter single-handed into a violent war with the policy and love of expediency which reigned in the hearts of the majority of the earliest leaders of the Arya Samaj and thus to raise against himself the combination of hostile forces in that growing body. Again the same highest psychic forces brought him into conflict with the members of his own society on the question of *Kuch Behar* marriage. This was a marriage which very rudely violated the cherished principles of the Brahmo Samaj and no less a leader of that Samaj than Babu Keshab Chandra Sen was involved in it. This marriage was arranged between the eldest daughter of Babu K.C. Sen who was not till then even of fourteen years and had not accordingly attained the marriag-

able age fixed by Act III of 1872 (passed as a result of Babu K. C. Sen's own initiation and most active support) and the young Maharaja of Kuch Behar who was a minor—being only of fifteen—and was not a Brahmo. At Calcutta this news created a sensation and its public announcement “was a signal for many from amongst the general body of Brahmos, as well as the female emancipationists, the constitutionists, the five lamps men, and the secret league men to combine into a strong and compact body of protesters against the intended marriage.” [History of Brahmo Samaj by S. N. Shastri, Vol. I, p, 377.]

But though at Calcutta, a general body of the Brahmos united to protest against this step of Babu K. C. Sen and called the marriage a sin, at Lahore Bhagwan Dev Atma was the *only* solitary person who opposed this painful and sinful step. Writes Pandit S. N. Shastri in the second volume of his history of Brahmo Samaj :—

“When that controversy (Kuch Behar marriage) broke out the Samaj members (at Lahore) declared in favour of neutrality.

But Pandit Agnihotri (Bhagwan Dev Atma) who strongly inclined in favour of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, gave up his membership of the Punjab Samaj, which kept to the neutral policy, and established a private prayer meeting at his own house As a consequence of the Kuch Behar marriage controversy Pandit Agnihotri started a separate organisation of his own; but Samaj members on the other side, under the leadership of Dr. Brij Lal Ghose, braced themselves up for carrying on the ordinary work of the Samaj.....”

Thus in Punjab, Bhagwan Dev Atma's voice was the only voice which was absolutely and fearlessly raised against all untruth and wrong whether found in his own society or outside, and his devoted and complete love of truth and goodness left no room in his mind to give way to all those considerations which weigh with mankind—the considerations of fame, name, public opinion, happiness, peace of mind, ties of friendships etc., etc. He sacrificed every thing at the altar of his beloved ideal of truth and goodness.

But we shall invariably find that Bhagwan Dev Atma brought always an open mind on any question and he weighed all sides for and against it. He would even lean on generosity when judging an opponent's position. But when after mature thought it became crystal clear to him on the basis of facts that he was in the right, he let no consideration stand in the way of his plunging wholeheartedly in the conflict in defence of truth and goodness. We quote at length *some* of the contributions of Bhagwan Dev Atma on the Kuch Behar marriage controversy from the columns of the *Brother of India* for the year 1878 to illustrate Bhagwan Dev Atma's position:—

A.

In the March issue of that year Bhagwan wrote:—

“During last month, the question of the marriage (of minor girl of Babu K. C. Sen with the minor boy, Maharaja of Kuch Behar) has caused such a widespread stir and agitation in papers all over India that there is no renowned English paper which has not taken notice of it and given one or two columns

to the controversy. The Calcutta press has been simply caught up by this sensation. In the columns of Indian Mirror—a well-known Brahmo Samaj paper—a heated controversy and correspondence is going on for the last few days. We have very carefully gone through all these articles, letters etc., and we are in a position now to place the important facts on this question before our readers with our own opinion.”

“Babu Keshab Chandra Sen is too well-known in connection with the Brahmo Samaj to need any introduction at our hands. There is no civilized country in the world which has not heard something about his personality and work. The world has always an eye at the public life of every public man, but it is specially mindful of all public and private acts of every day life of prophets, messengers or great reformers. This is because thousands and millions of lives are closely linked to them and are considerably influenced by their example so much so that the smallest acts of their life leave good or bad impressions on their character. It is because Babu

K. C. Sen is a founder of religious movement and a reformer, that several members of the Brahmo Samaj are leading a violent protest against the marriage of his daughter. The reason for this huge agitation lies in the fact that Babu K. C. Sen has arranged the marriage of his eldest daughter aged thirteen years and ten months with Maharaja of Kuch Behar who is aged about 16 years. As the Maharaja is a minor and under the protection of British Government, the government itself made a move in this arrangement. The government gave the Maharaja full choice to see the girl for himself and if satisfied to enter into life long wedlock with her. It is also rumoured that the girl too has accepted Maharaja Sahib of her own free choice. The Indian Mirror writes that Maharaja Sahib's estate yields an annual income of eleven lacs and he himself is not only high born but good-natured, very intelligent and a capable prince and has received good English education. Above all he is a believer in the Brahma Dharm. All these considerations incline the editor of the Indian Mirror to a conviction that the proposed marriage is not only very highly com-

mendable and laudable but pregnant with most beneficial results in the promotion of the cause of the Brahmo Samaj. It is well-known that no religious movement comes into full fruition unless it is taken up by rajas or great influential lords. Hence the admission of the Maharaja of Kuch Behar in the Brahmo Samaj is a matter of pride for the Brahmos."

"It was most likely that this marriage would have been delayed for some time. But as the government intends sending Maharaja Sahib to England for higher education; and as it is proposed to have marriage celebrated before Maharaja Sahib sails for England, the government has suggested to Babu K. C. Sen to have the ceremonies performed within this month. Babu K. C. Sen has given his assent. From the time that the news about the marriage have become public, a sensation has been created in the body of the Brahmo Samaj. One section in the Samaj disapproves of this proposed marriage. Nay, they condemn it as a sinful step. They also consider such an example set by Babu K. C. Sen as highly detrimental to the interests of the Samaj. It

is this section which has engineered a violent opposition against Babu K. C. Sen. This section at first drafted a letter of protest and sent it to Babu K. C. Sen, signed by 23 Brahmos. In this letter they expressed their strong disapproval of the proposed marriage of his daughter with the Maharaja of Kuch Behar, firstly, because both the girl and the bridegroom are minors and hence it is a child marriage; secondly, as a child marriage it is a sin; thirdly, because it was due to the efforts of Babu K. C. Sen himself that Act III of 1872 was passed to abolish child marriage and in the Act it is laid down that marriage of a girl under 14 and of a boy under 18 is a child marriage. Hence a man who is himself the founder of such an Act should be the first to profit by it and it is wrong on his part not to comply with it; fourthly, when Babu K. C. Sen himself would celebrate the marriage of his minor girl, many a person would imitate his example and thus consider child marriage as proper; fifthly, as the Maharaja Sahib comes of a family which has been following an immemorial custom of polygamy and though he has

received English education, it is not impossible that he may imitate his ancestors and

life-time of his first wife”.

“It appears that Babu K. C. Sen paid no attention to this letter of protest. After this it has been published in various papers. In order to create public opinion against this step the oppositionists sent copies of this letter to the Brahmo Samajes in India and invited their opinion about the matter. It is understood that most of the Samajes have agreed with the protesters. With all these opinions of several Samajes in their possession, they wanted to hold a protest meeting in the Albert Hall. Having failed there, on account of several reasons, they held on 28th February 1878 a big meeting in the Town Hall. In this meeting they at last passed two resolutions with great enthusiasm. In the first resolution they said that they viewed such a marriage as opposed to the high principles of the Samaj and though the meeting had nothing to do with the private acts of Babu K. C. Sen, but as this marriage was calculated to materially prejudice the cause

of the Brahmo Samaj, and as the Secretary of the Brahmo Samaj, he has paid no attention to the public opinion of the Brahmos, they have therefore lost faith in him. The second resolution was proposed by Pandit S. N. Shastari M. A. By this a committee of some persons was appointed to take such measures as they consider necessary, in the present crisis to conserve the best interests of the Samaj and to keep its working duly regular and intact."

"This is all that we have said about the party opposing the marriage. There is also another party which is in its favour. Some leading members of Adi Brahmo Samaj have lent their support to this party. These persons convened a meeting in the Albert Hall. They sent a letter signed by 250 persons congratulating Babu K. C. Sen on this step and stating the most blessed results which would ensue from the marriage. Besides this several letters for and against have appeared and are appearing in several papers. Those who are in favour of this marriage say that firstly Babu K. C. Sen has been the author of Civil Marriage Act III of 1872 for the

good of the public and it is not incumbent on him to necessarily subject himself to its provisions specially when Maharaja Kuch Behar was probably not bound by the Act and some political and moral considerations compelled the government to have the marriage ceremony performed before Maharaja Sahib started for England. Secondly, though the bride and the bridgroom have not attained the age required by the Act, yet physically they are matured enough to get the marriage solemnized. Thirdly, Maharaja Sahib is now under the protection of the English government. After his return, he will have the good fortune to associate with a mahatma like Babu K. C. Sen. Hence it is improbable that he will ever have another polygamous marriage. It is hardly a sound reason to say that because the ancestors of any one have been given to a vice therefore he too would as an inevitable consequence commit that vice. If this is counted as a sound reason, then those persons in the opposite camp whose ancestors were polygamous should themselves have also married more than one wife. But now they consider

polygamy an evil and wrong because of the light of education. This same light can influence the Maharaja also to be monogamous."

"Babu K. C. Sen has not come out with any written statement of his own case and in absence of facts of *both* parties being before us we cannot decide who is in the right and who in the wrong. We however endorse the view of Hindu Patriot that Babu K. C. Sen being a founder and leader of the progressive body of the Brahmo Samaj knows his own responsibilities and the dignity of his position, and if such a man takes any step, he must have some grave reasons for it. He perhaps understands that by this marriage and specially when the daughter of such a Mahatma as Babu K. C. Sen becomes a Maharani, the Brahmo Samaj in general and the state in particular would be amply benefited."

"However after *viewing both sides* as they at present stand *we are compelled by the dictates of truth to say that so far the ages of the marrying couple are concerned the marriage is not desirable* specially when Babu K. C. Sen himself has often been im-

pressing upon the workers of Brahmo Samaj that they should in no case countenance the marriages of girls under the age of 14 and boys under 18. *Hence we extend our sympathies to all those Brahmos who have protested against this marriage.* There is a section in the Brahmo Samaj which does not view such an opposition as good. But at times such opposition is wholesome, as not only does it strengthen and purify the body but it raises its status as well The Brahmo Samaj on principle considers the blind and credulous following of any leader to be wrong, and in practice too it gives its members no discouragement in protesting against the actions of any great personality in the Samaj if they think those actions wrong Hence those who have raised a voice of protest against this marriage have our full sympathy and support though these objectionists sometimes use immoderate language and run to excesses which they should not.

“As the agitation on this question has not ceased and no statement of Babu K. C. Sen is yet published, we leave this question where

it is and mean to advert to it in our some subsequent issue."

(B)

As stated above the protestors at Calcutta had sent a circular letter to several provincial Samajes stating the reasons of their protest and inviting their opinion. "Within a few days" says Pt. S. N. Shastri M. A., in his History of the Brahmo Samaj, "letters of protest poured in from individual Brahmos and principal Samajes. I cannot stop to give here the purport of the letters; suffice it to say that out of 80 Samajes in Bengal as many as 50 expressed their disapprobation; 3 only were in favour of the marriage; 4 expressed no decided opinion; and the rest remained silent."

Says Bhagwan Dev Atma in Part I of his "Unique Renunciations" (p. 169):—

"They (*i. e.* Calcutta protestors) sent printed circular letters about the whole affair to many Brahmo Samajes inviting their opinions about it and one such letter was also received by the Lahore Brahmo Samaj. But several blind and credulous Brahmos accepting Babu K. C. Sen as a

prophet of God, did not like to raise any voice of protest against the marriage. I pressed the matter on to them and told them that as the followers of Dharma it was our bounden duty to support truth and that we should not disappoint those who have sought our co-operation in their war in defence of truth. With extreme difficulty a general meeting of the members (of Lahore Brahmo Samaj) was convened. The matter was thoroughly thrashed in the meeting. Though the followers of Babu K. C. Sen did not like that any resolution should be put forward and passed, yet against their such wishes the following resolution was at last passed in this meeting by majority of votes:—

“ That this meeting has learnt with concern that the marriage of Babu K. C. Sen's daughter is not going to be celebrated according to the Act III of 1872 and is open to other objections and that Mr. Sen, being the recognised leader of the Brahmo Samaj of India should have taken this step, which is calculated to cast a gloom over the rising church of the Brahmo Samaj. This meeting, after mature deliberation and on the strength

of the letters received from Calcutta Brahmos, puts on record with regret that the proposed marriage, if it actually takes place, will not have the concurrence of the Brahmos."

Though this resolution was passed and despatched in February, yet it was not entered in the proceedings book for several months due to the tactics of some workers in the Brahmo Samaj. When Bhagwan Dev Atma ultimately came to know of this, it came to him as a shocking surprise that some Brahmo workers could be guilty of this dark and underhand policy.

C.

In the April issue of the *Brother of India*, Bhagwan Dev Atma wrote another article which we quote here in extenso for the edification of our readers as it is not only an important piece of history but a very significant writing suggestive of Bhagwan Dev Atma's position in this controversy. Bhagwan wrote:—

"In the last issue of our journal, we have described merely those events which

happened before this marriage was celebrated. We are in a position now to publish some events which took place at the time of marriage and close this matter here for the present with our final comments."

"All proceedings in connection with the marriage took such bewildering turns that it is a most difficult job to correctly describe them in detail and form an accurate estimate of them. But looking to the mass of writings that we have already read and that are now on our table for and against the marriage, we are at least in a position to assert that the opposition of the protesters is not *without fair and just basis*. And when, leaving aside this marriage, we look to the past history of the Brahmo Samaj and compare the present state with what is in store for us as the inevitable results that are to follow, we consider the present protest by the objectionists as calculated to strengthen the principles of the Brahmo Samaj and to raise its prestige and grandeur....."

"We therefore do not consider that this controversy is to end only with passing final opinions on the propriety or otherwise of the

objections raised for or against the marriage, but that this controversy having raised issues (of first importance) it was bound to bring about a conflict and hence it is a providential occurrence."

"This marriage was celebrated with great magnificance and in full swing of enthusiasm in Kuch Behar on 6th of March 1878. Before the marriage was celebrated the protesters raised objections against it only on the score of its being a child marriage. But when the marriage was celebrated they found several things connected with the rites and ceremonies which savoured of idolatry. They placed therefore the following charges against it. *Firstly*, the marriage was not performed exactly according to the Brahmo rites. *Secondly*, in the place where the ceremony took place, several things such as *Har*, *Gouri* and *Khat* etc., which are associated with idolatrous rites, were placed. *Thirdly*, "*Homa*" ceremony was also performed. *Fourthly*, the bride was made to pass through *praschita* purification. *Fifthly*, dance by dancing girls did take place and customary filthy songs were also sung. *Sixthly*, as

Keshab Chandra Sen had crossed black waters, he was considered by the other side as unclean and thus the gift of the daughter was made by his brother and not by him. Though the objection of the Raja's party was foolish yet as Babu K. C. Sen gave in, it is clear that he unconsciously acted against the principles of his Samaj. How far these objections were right, we had no facts before us from the other side to judge correctly upto now. But to-day we have got a supplement to 'Dharamtatwa' (an organ of Babu K. C. Sen). We have read that and we have come to know what the other side has to say. This supplement has been published by two gentlemen, Babu Partab Chandra Mozumdar and Gour Govind Roy, Assistant Secretary Brahmo Samaj of India and Secretary Brahmo Missionary Conference respectively. The writers say that they have published facts which they have gathered after due enquiry and have done so with the sanction and under the direction of Babu K. C. Sen. After giving details in full about the marriage, the writers have arrived at the conclusion that (1) neither this marriage can

be called a child marriage, (2) nor any kind of idolatry has been done in its performance. In defence of the marriage not being early, they have advanced the arguments mentioned by us in our last issue that the marriage ceremony was merely a formal matter and it was more of the nature of betrothal than real marriage as according to the wishes of the Government the Maharaja Sahib left for England immediately after the rites and ceremonies were over. Again the Act III of 1872 which was passed at the instance of Keshab Babu, did not apply to the Maharaja and if the marriage had come under that Act then of course the age limits of bride and bridegroom would have been applicable. The writers could not deny that idols were placed there while marriage was being performed, but they say that the bride did not at all perform any idolatrous rites. They deny that any *praschittya* ceremony was performed so far bride was concerned. All that they acknowledge to have been done was that a gold *mohar* was brought by the Maharaja's grandmother, with which she touched the bride's hand and then laid it on the ground.

About the bridegroom it may be said that he himself has no faith in idolatry, and he had to be present at the ceremony of Homa merely at the instance of the Government. If, however, his priests, have indulged in idolatrous practices, surely the Maharaja cannot be held responsible for them."

"Our readers can for themselves decide how far these arguments have any soundness about them. We however on our part consider them as lame excuses. Besides this the writers themselves admit that it was not the object of Baboo K. C. Sen to justify all the circumstances that have transpired in connection with the marriage of his daughter or completely to vindicate his own conduct in this matter. There are certain things in relation to the marriage, which, if they have pained any body, have pained him much more than others. The marriage has not been entirely in accordance with his own wishes and he has never made a secret of his dissatisfaction on this point."

"This is all right. But when we read along with the above the following few lines, we feel great astonishment:—

‘According to the will and commandments of his God, he has indeed given his daughter in marriage to a royal house’.

“We confidently say that we are neither enamoured of this kind of revelation, nor do we find any trace of such imaginary revelation in the principles of Brahmo Samaj. In our opinion Keshab Baboo has acted under a great delusion in this respect. Those who support this marriage, the performance of which is wholly against the principles of Brahmo Samaj, merely, on the score that it is ordained by God’s revelation, expose themselves to still greater blame. The sooner such persons awaken to the shallowness of their position and superstitious belief, the better it is for them and the welfare of the Samaj.”

This was Bhagwan Dev Atama’s position in relation to the wrong step into which Babu K. C. Sen was lured by circumstances. At Calcutta there was a section of progressive Brahmos who opposed this step of their leader but in the whole of the Punjab, Bhagwan Dev Atma stood all alone in his protest. To him all that mattered was truth and hence he took no

stock of what the world would say but launched into a war for its defence at all costs.

D.

In the May issue of 'Brother of India' we read another instance of a very enthusiastic Brahmo succumbing to the monster of orthodox and idolatrous rites on his own marriage. Brahmo Samaj was distinguished for its avowed hostility to idolatry and its members not only professed abhorrence for idolatry but preached against it. But when the time of putting their profession into practice came some backslided. To a lover of truth like Bhagwan Dev Atma it not only came as a bewildering surprise but as a painful and bitter experience of human souls. As soon as Bhagwan Dev Atma came to know of the lapse made by one of the earnest Brahmos, he raised a voice of protest at once in his own paper. Bhagwan Dev Atma wrote:—

"On Tuesday 30th of April 1878, marriage of Lala Kashi Ram—an earnest and active young Brahmo—was celebrated at Amritsar. A very respectable and trust worthy friend of ours has informed us orally that Lala Kashi Ram,

like his other Punjabee fellows has permitted those prevalent idolatrous and harmful rites to be observed and those superstitious customs to be followed, which it is the prime object of Brahmo Samaj to root out. To tell the truth when we have to write such events in which truth is ruthlessly sacrificed, we receive indescribable pain and anguish of heart. We consider such examples set by our own members as most inauspicious and ominous for the cause of our Samaj. Outsiders consider Punjabees to be a brave race but sad it is that we find no trace of moral heroism in them in the pursuit of any right principle. Those who boast of having God as their refuge and yet at the hour of trial abandon that refuge and run to the shelter of the world are either not honest in their faith or are absolutely ignorant of the true attributes of God and His Omnipotence who is the source of truth and true protector of the lovers of truth. We see several sects and Samajes in the Punjab. But we would reckon them all as shallow and insignificant so long their members do not practise the noble principles they preach. We consider illiteracy thousand times better than knowledge which is divorced from condu

May our countrymen awaken even at this stage and realize the gravity and extreme importance of the facts of religion and truth and the true principles of higher life and mould their daily life after them."



CHAPTER XXV.



Hatred against callous indifference to evil and falsehood or the true motives of Bhagwan's agitation against Arya and Brahmo Samajes &c.

We have, before this, dealt with Bhagwan Dev Atma's emphatic protest against certain practices found both in the Arya Samaj and the Brahmo Samaj. We asserted that Bhagwan's love of truth and goodness led him on to count no sacrifice too great in putting down the voice of untruth and wrong wherever found and it was this imperious love which brought him into mortal grips with heavy odds. It would however be far more interesting and authoritative to quote at this stage two very informing and elevating articles which Bhagwan Dev Atma wrote on "Indifference" in *Birader-i-Hind* in its issues for August and September 1881 in which he told his readers in plainest possible terms why he thought it a duty on him to agitate against certain things in the Arya Samaj and Brahmo Samaj. Bhagwan wrote:—

I

"Besides hundreds of other evils which creep into the body of degraded nations, the one that we count among the most disastrous is the attitude of 'indifference.' We regard this evil as the most dreadful. This evil force finds a dominant place or secures sovereign rule specially in a nation whose hearts are ruled by absolute selfishness and are disabled from seeing the beauty of moral life by the clouds of ignorance (or soul-darkness). In the legislature of this kingdom of indifference only such statutes are passed which aim at laying an axe at the root of that higher force which is called true sympathy in various relations. The ultimate aim of this evil is to cut off man from man. The supreme object of this evil is to make man wholly self-centred. With the spread of this evil all the national relations break down. The considerations of good and evil in social organism lose their hold on the minds of individuals and all activities of such people are motivated by exclusive personal gain or personal loss."

"Our nation presents a living illustration of the sovereignty of this evil. The individuals forming our nation are in general deeply

absorbed in their own selfish affairs..... Just talk to a man about the sad condition of his own brother and he would forthwith say, "why should I concern myself with another man's affairs; every one will reap as he sows." Ask an educated person to agitate for Civil Service Examination in India. He would forthwith reply, "My good Sir ! why should I trouble myself. Have I to become a Deputy Commissioner." Leave politics aside. Let us look to our social body. We find it riddled at thousands of places by the missiles of evil social customs. If A has no daughter to get married and his poverty-stricken brother has a grown up daughter to dispose of but whom he is not able to get married because of the heavy expenditure which the prevalent social custom demands on marriages; Mr. A would not care a bit to agitate against such a social tyranny even to help his own brother. So far so that if we have in our very house a young widow who is acutely feeling her forlorn state, and whose remarriage we believe to be our duty, we manifest callous indifference to her lamentable state, and our springs of sympathy even in her relation get dried up, because owing to utter selfishness the

only motives that rule us are about our own fancied good or evil. We are afraid only of incurring the displeasure of our castemen in case we help the wretched widow. This nightmare of the wrath of our castemen paralyses our mind to such an extent that it becomes impossible for us even to think of the miseries of that poor widow. Thus owing to the motives of personal consideration of being in good books of the world, we become indifferent and pass our days in peace, though the atmosphere is rent by the cries and lamentations of the oppressed widow.

“ But this indifference produces most terrible and harmful results when it is manifested in the world of moral life. It should be the bounden duty of all the leaders of such religious societies which have for their object the moral amelioration of our countrymen to see that this canker does not eat their heart or the hearts of those placed under their guidance. We say it with certainty that the Punjab Central Brahmo Samaj (founded by Bhagwan Dev Atma—Ed.) would never have come into existence if the original Brahmo Samaj of Punjab had considered

this evil in its true perspective. On the contrary one of the written articles of faith of the Punjab Brahmo Samaj countenances this dreadful indifference about the good or evil of others. It is a matter of supreme indifference to them whether the various Brahmo Samajes in India flourish or decay. They feel unconcerned if howsoever absurd practices creep into the Samaj. They stand unaffected even if wrong and absurd principles are published in the name of Brahm Dharam. We fail to understand for what earthly object is their society established when it is utterly oblivious even to the good of the Brahm Dharam or Brahmo Samaj ? Those who countenance this indifference and knowingly manifest it in relation to moral life, do degrade themselves gradually by such behaviour. Suppose a person were to declare publicly in our very presence that "*Hom*" is in accordance with Brahmo principles when in fact it is not, and that the members of Brahmo Samaj consider "*Hom*" as one of the most cardinal elements in soul-purification and that they uphold caste system, and suppose that the person making these assertions is a big man

enjoying high social distinction and those whom he is addressing are all wealthy Hindus for whom we generally have great esteem, what should be our attitude if no other member of the Brahmo Samaj except us is present there? Should it be of one who chooses to remain silent because he is afraid of incurring the odium of the assembly by causing disturbance in it and of earning disapprobation of that honored speaker by opposing him or because of the satisfaction that he himself does not believe in what has been said by that speaker? What would be the effect of this indifference? This would on the one hand fling many of the audience deeper into the mire of false ideas and on the other would weaken our moral courage. Because though we have not actively helped a wrong yet we have all the same deliberately connived at it and thus helped forward what was opposed to truth and are undoubtedly responsible for it. Sheikh Saadi has rightly said that if a man sees, a well and a blind man going towards it and keeps silent, he becomes a sinner. *The man who does not on all occasions and under all conditions*

stand for what is right or what is truth can never be called a true friend of truth. Such a person is like that selfish worldly wise man who always keeps his self supreme and is prepared to stand by truth only to the extent it demands no sacrifice of his selfish interests, and does not invoke on his head public displeasure. Like a fallen woman he desires to please all and considers all talk about his spiritual evolution or degradation as a prattle of children. May God preserve Brahma Samaj from the hands of such persons and may He make it the true friend of truth on all occasions.

II

"To defend and practise truth and to avoid and oppose untruth is obligatory on every human being irrespective of caste, creed, colour and country. The decline of our land for centuries has made our people oblivious to this great truth. However contact with the Britishers has begun to lesson to some extent this sad state of affairs. Still on deep consideration, it would not be improper to say that in the last half a century of

British connection we have as yet made only a beginning.

“In order to defend and follow truth there are three essential stages :—

Firstly—BELIEF that the real good of man lies in accepting and following what is true, or what is truly good or what is a fact.

Secondly—When our reason accepts the glory of truth, it becomes obligatory on us to declare it as such whether that truth pertains to matters religious, social, political or scientific.

Thirdly—when after mental belief our heart too realizes the beauty and sublimity of truth and develops love for it, it becomes incumbent upon us not only to make a declaration of it but to follow it in our every day life *i.e.* practise what we believe and preach.”

“If we compare the present day condition of our people with the above three essential stages of truth, we shall at once find that not to say of the latter two points even the first element has not taken root in the hearts of our people. Out of the population

of 24 crores of our land, we do not come across even one per cent who have full faith in the first point that in truth lies our highest welfare. Leave aside those great masses of illiterate people who have perhaps not even heard of this first point what is the condition of those who style themselves as educated or cultured? They even do not realize the above belief? Had this very limited circle developed a faith that in the acceptance of truth lies their great good, we would have felt some satisfaction and cast off the clouds of deep dispondency. The education which is given in *our schools and colleges is very detrimental as regards the training of morals or cultivation of Character.* When we study the lives of thousands of youngmen turned out as educated from various schools and colleges, we find that many of these literate and cultured friends do not know even the definition of truth and are unaware of what relation truth bears to our life. Majority of them seem innocent even of the phraseology of spiritual good or national welfare. Within the walls of the educational seminaries, all

that they cook up are few text books prescribed for their Examination beyond which they seem to know nothing. And when after completing their education, they enter life, they are absolutely caught up by the considerations of bodily maintenance and sensual comforts and manifest strange indifference to all other duties of life”

Voice against Arya Samaj.

“When we turn our attention from all other parts of our country and confine it for a while to our own part (*i.e.* Northern India), we clearly find that even those very few so-called religious societies which have of late been established in this part of the country too betray the same poverty of belief even in the first essentials of truth. The Arya Samajes which have been set up in various places show very great fervour as regards political reform. But it is regrettable their earnestness and fervour are not based on solid foundation. . . . *that the members of the Arya Samaj generally do not seem to believe that in the acceptance and practice of truth and truth alone lies the best welfare of*

man. Because we are ourselves familiar with the lives of many members of of the Arya Samaj who occupy the leading position in their society. These leading members have not only no faith in Vedic revelation but have no faith even in the existence of God Himself. So far morality is concerned they do not also pin their faith on its immutable principles. In their opinion it is not necessary always and under all circumstances to speak the truth. *They believe that it is highly beneficial to their interests to sometimes abstain from it.* We do not say that all members of the Arya Samaj are of this type. There are many who of course honestly believe in its principles. What we complain about is that though many members of the Arya Samaj know definitely like ourselves that many a leading member of their Samaj as stated above has no faith in the Samaj principles yet they are knowingly keeping silent about them in violation of all honesty and good conscience. Nay they connive at all that. This clearly proves that not only those persons who inspite of their want of belief in the Samaj principles continue to

call themselves its members, are dead souls so far their belief in the truth is concerned, but even those persons who countenance these frauds seem also to have no faith that in truth lies our highest welfare. Have we not so often exposed their falsehoods in our articles? Have we not exploded many of their errors on the authority of their own writings? We have many times done so. Nay we have exposed the untruths of their founder, Swami Dayanand himself. But we find none of them accepting truth and defending it against untruth”

Voice Against Brahmo Samaj.

“Let us now turn to Brahmo Samaj. We are in a position to assert that so far belief in the principles of the Brahmo Samaj is concerned, all its members are honest. There is none in the Brahmo Samaj who is not sincere in his faith in the doctrines of his society. But ordinarily their conscience is all the same very weak. Though they believe in the triumph of truth yet they betray great weakness so far declaring and following the truth is concerned. Though as regards their belief they are called members of the Brahmo

Samaj yet their soul condition is not better than that of the majority of our other countrymen..... Leaving a few exceptions we find that in the generality of the Samaj members, we miss that moral courage which could enable them to stand by truth or even to declare it before the public. It is due to their woeful lack of interest or indifference that they stand unconcerned and merely behold as spectators all those activities of Babu K. C. Sen and his few followers who have been corrupting the purity of the Brahm Dharm and knowingly or unknowingly laying an axe at the root of that flourishing state of Brahm Samaj which has taken half a century to achieve the present fruitful state. All that does not smite their heart. Suppose our dear little ones are asleep and a poisonous reptile is creeping steadily but surely towards them in order to sting them. What would the sensible world think of our behaviour if we stand indifferent and move not a little finger to save them? Our Brahm friends are in truth maintaining the 'Dèvil may care' attitude. For the last three years Sadharan

Brahmo Samaj has been labouring hard to save their society from various absurd and false beliefs and practices, and though there are scores of the mufasil Brahmo Samajes which have come to realize the hollowness of those absurd practices, yet they have not courage enough to make even a verbal protest against them. Does not this betray a very weak and enfeebled state of soul? Is not such an indifference most deplorable? This state of indifference or insensitiveness is opposed to all the duties or obligations which morality imposes on us. Hence this indifference is positively a sin. Our hearts cannot remain unaffected in the matters of morality. All our inclinations depend upon our heart forces. . . . If a constable has unduly beaten a poor man in our presence and the aggrieved party has filed a complaint against that cruel constable, we try our level best to avoid going to court to give evidence. Even when cited and summoned, we try to escape by saying that we know nothing. We thus try to maintain an attitude of "no concern" even in such matters. But our heart is moulded all the same for good or for evil. Because

we choose to remain unmoved that does not mean that our hearts are not affected. Is it not true that the constable had oppressed another? If instead of helping the poor man and the cause of justice, we try to stand aside, do we not by that very behaviour murder justice?"

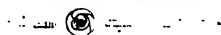
All the civilized nations consider this kind of indifference very harmful. This want of courage to stand by the truth which Bhagwan deplored so pathetically and forcibly at that time is visible even to-day in the largest majority of our educated people. So far Arya Samaj is concerned there is an increasing number of people in the society which according to the admissions of their own writers, does not believe in the principles of Arya Samaj and yet continue to be its members. Can men of this type be credited with belief that truth alone leads to our true welfare?



CHAPTER XXVI.



Taking up of His Unique Life Mission.



The evolution of various highest psychic forces of love of truth and goodness and hatred for untruth and wrong gave Bhagwan's soul an absolutely new and distinct type. The drama that these powers began to play in the world came as an altogether new experience to those around. There was no untruth and no wrong, which he believed as such and which he did not vehemently expose, irrespective of all considerations; and there was no cause of truth and goodness which he believed as such and which he did not fearlessly champion. He never in the least cared for popular favour, or frown praise or blame or any kind of persecution. All his time, besides the few hours of service, he devoted exclusively and singlemindedly in worship, study, contemplation, writing, holding meetings in order to deliver sermons.

or public lectures for the good of others, doing various activities for the welfare of his own society or other Sabhas (societies) etc. All these various activities in the service of the cause of truth and goodness in their turn made his highest psychic forces stronger and mightier, so much so that they began to grow imperious in their demands and were not content with fully absorbing all his wakeful time, barring the few hours of service, but demanded his all for their service. They became jealous even of the few hours, he spent in Government service though even those few hours, were spent in the welfare of others.

Says Bhagwan Dev Atma in his most inspiring booklet "Atam Katha":—

"At the age of about 23 years, I came to Lahore. Here besides the hours of teaching in school, I devoted all the rest of my time in study, contemplation, writing, delivering sermons or lectures and in doing various other acts for the welfare of others. I had no social connection with others however highly placed they were, save with very a few select persons. Even in this limited circle of my acquaintances, I was not very

intimate with more than one or two very good souls. The reason was that temperamentally I was quite different from them. I was not a bird of the same feather with them. Hence intimacy could not grow amongst us. The temporary connection which was formed with some had also to be given up after sometime for one or the other reason”.

“I had at that time strongest faith in the imaginary being called God. I belived Him to be an embodiment of truth, goodness and beauty, and worshipped him as such. As I had in my own soul evolved various forces of love of truth and goodness, I naturally grew to be the most devoted lover or true Bhagata of such a being.”

“Though, owing to the evolution in me of various forces of *parhit* (highest good of others), I passed all my waking time besides few hours of school service, in the cause of welfare and well-being of others, I began to feel an urge now and then (due to this imperious love of good of others) that I should break off all these bonds of Government service and devote myself wholesale in the highest good of others”.

“It was perhaps on some day in the year 1879 or 1880 that I was reading in my house an account of the philanthropic work of Miss Mary Carpenter. She was an English lady. During those days juvenile offenders were herded in jails with confirmed and hardened criminals and their association with these hardened rogues naturally contaminated and spoiled the whole life of these young offenders. Hundreds of thousands of persons in England saw all this, but they never realized the horror of this practice, because they possessed no higher sense or consciousness which could make them see and realize this evil. The noble heart of Miss Carpenter felt this evil as horrible and it urged her on to rise and make an effort to remove it. She took up the work in right earnest. After years of continuous struggle, she succeeded in this work. The Government agreed to accept her demand. The juvenile criminals ceased to be herded with old hardened offenders, and arrangements were made to keep them separate in order to save them from being injured by their evil influences”.

“After attaining success in England she directed her struggles towards similar reformation in the jails of India too. She came here several times with the same object. After long struggles her efforts were crowned with success here also. It is said that when Raja Ram Mohan Roy had gone to England and was a guest in the house of her father, she was quite a young girl. Her noble heart was so powerfully drawn to this great man that she fully desired to unite herself with him in sacred wedlock. But when she came to know that not only was the Raja married but that his wife was alive, she had to give up the idea of marriage with him. She however determined to remain all her life a celibate and made a resolve that if she was not able to marry this great man and thus serve him, she would, as the next best, serve the land of his birth as far as she could. With this noble resolve she came to India several times. She also formed in England a society under the name of “National Indian Association” with the sole object of propagating education among Indian women and bringing about social companionship and nearness among

Indians and Europeans. This society has been in existence since then. In India too it has several branches, and the Association is doing some useful work every year."

"This story as regards her relation with Raja Ram Mohan Roy may or may not be true, but so far as its second part is concerned that Miss Carpenter, moved by the true higher feeling of public good, worked for many years in order to bring about the much needed jail reform and that she established the above named Association, it is absolutely correct."

"On reading her life story, when the beautiful picture of the feeling of her unselfish service of others and that too in relation to my land, came vividly before my mind's eye, my heart was at once powerfully moved. My own higher feeling in this respect was so deeply roused that I burst spontaneously into tears and cried loud to myself:—Ah! A foreigner's heart should realize the horror of an evil of my land to such an extent as to cross thousands of miles and come over here several times to struggle for the removal

of that evil, while Indians themselves should become degraded and degenerated to such an extent as to show callous indifference even to their own good or evil of various kinds !! Oh! What a heart-breaking sight !!”

“This sight affected my heart deeply. My love for good of others grew stronger. The feeling of dedicating my all for the best service of my countrymen grew deeper.”

“In the end of the year 1880, a great calamity befell me. I lost her who was my most devoted friend, my one faithful companion in the path of higher life, my ever constant sharer in weal and woe, *i.e.* my own beloved wife. What a tremendous loss ! What a most painful and disheartening catastrophe it was for a lonely and unique traveller (on the path of higher life) like myself to have lost the one and the only true fellow-traveller, the one true comforter, the one great inspirer and a loyal friend !!! This irreparable loss filled my heart with great sorrow for some time. But gradually and steadily this shock abated. In 1881 I took a year’s leave and lived outside Lahore for 8 or 9 months. It was in the November of

1881 that I married a *second time. After that I resumed charge of my school duties.”

“In the beginning of the year 1882 my forces of love of truth and goodness again began to urge me to give up my all for the singleminded service of their cause. Favourable circumstances cropped up which strengthened this urge. This year the books that I read contained the life of Mahatma Buddha. It strengthened still more my above longing and a struggle arose in my heart. I saw, on the one hand, the most degraded, superstition-ridden, sinful and most deplorable moral and spiritual condition of people around me which appealed to my powerful feeling of the good of others in mute but most eloquent language, and urged me that I was not intended to remain a schoolmaster but was destined for some far higher ideal; and on the other several other ideas came in my head such as under:—

* This time Bhagwan married a young Bengalee widow who, though a Brahman, yet did not belong to any of those sub-castes in which Bhagwan's family people could marry. Thus by this marriage he set an example in his own life, not only of widow remarriage but that of an inter-caste and inter-provincial marriage too.

(1) I was drawing Rs. 150 per mensem. Besides others, I had a wife and three children who depended solely on me for their maintenance and bringing up. What would become of them if I gave up my present job?

(2) The feeling of my self-respect repeatedly warned me that it was impossible for me to make an appeal for monetary help to others for my own self or for my family.

(3) How was it possible for man in general even to cherish a feeling of reverence for me when my ideal was absolutely different from the ideal of those lacs of so-called "Sadhus" who roamed at large in this great sub-continent, when my spiritual life and my daily programme of it had nothing in common with them, when I did not believe like them in the breaking off of all relationships and throwing away the responsibilities connected with them, and did not consider such an action as religious, when I believed in none of their Shastras, when I did not at all desire to lead life as they did and follow the programme of work that they followed? Who would care for me under such circumstances?

(4) My religious path was new, my renunciations were uncommon, my ideal was unique, my work was of novel kind. With all this uniqueness or newness about me, how could it be possible for me to expect any help or even good treatment at the hands of my countrymen who would on the contrary hate me? My uncommon courses of conduct had already created a host of enemies for me. Leaving other thiests, even several God-worshippers of my own Samaj (Brahmo Samaj) had grown hostile to me."

"But all these latter considerations had not much weight in comparison to the former higher urge which I felt within me, because the evolution of the forces of love of truth and goodness had made it impossible for any lower feeling to thwart their onward course, though one or the other of them had caused some obstacle in their way. What was the reason then for such a struggle? It was because I had not till then, been able to decide that the urge that I felt within me to dedicate my all to the service of truth and goodness was

necessarily a command from my God whose earnest devotee I was and whose will, therefore, I was bound to obey. Besides this there stood before me two other obstacles. The one was that I had none to confide my struggles to, as I saw none able enough to throw any light in the way of my mental struggles.....The other was that though I had full faith in God's grace, I was not sure that besides manifesting mercy to all beings alike, He showed any special favour to any one. I had not till then come to believe in the "special providence." Hence all this kept me in the vortex of my inner struggles. A heavy storm was shaking my heart. I felt helpless as to whom I should go for light and how I should come to definite decision and thus gain peace and quietude of mind?"

"At last during these days another wonderful event happened. I had with me a Bengali tract which contained the talks of some God-worshippers in question and answer form on religious topics. I felt an impulse to read that book. I opened the book and began to read it. I found some questions and answers in it dealing with the problem

of special providence. The perusal of those lines at that time had a magical influence upon me. It, on the one hand, created in me faith in special providence, and on the other it also shed light on the question as to how it might be known that this impulse or higher urge was necessarily from God. It was stated therein that any urge which is from God does not desist after appearing once or twice but it persists.

“There was a huge fallacy involved in the outer form of both these matters though their inner sense was alright. God is merely a myth. Hence any urge from Him—a mythical being—is on the face of it absurd. But this much is true that when any feeling is present in the heart of any man or animal, it produces an urge or impulse to action. If the feeling is sufficiently strong and is not repressed by any other feeling, it not only once or twice but repeatedly urges a man to an action. Again there is no higher or evolutionary feeling which is not reinforced in its efforts in the march of higher evolution by that group of higher cosmic processes which originate it and which are always at the back of its evolution provided it is possessed

by a person to a sufficiently strong extent, and for which he is prepared to make all kinds of necessary renunciations and sacrifices with a view to remain true to it. In my own life this great fact or law has been fully vindicated. I did not know these truths about man and universe, at that time but I was in fact an evolutionist in spirit. Hence when I believed even in the mythical God, I did receive help from the evolutionary forces of Nature."

"I was now in a position to settle once for all about my inner struggles. I was already a master of my lower desire forces. And when I saw that the urge that I felt was from God, and that He wished me, the lover of truth and goodness as I was, that I should lay all my powers at His feet for the destruction of the reign of untruth and wrong and for the establishment of the reign of truth and goodness, and that when He, the embodiment of truth, goodness and beauty, was prepared to favour me with his special providence in my most difficult path and protect me in every way and promote my cause, why should I hesitate and not surrender myself

in all humility to his great Will? The awakening of this resolve prepared me fully for this sacrifice. All my indecision and hesitancy vanished. I formed a stern determination, that come what may, I must accept this unique life-vow and budge not an inch therefrom. I confided my this resolve to my wife. She saw the great difficulties that such a step would necessarily involve. But she did not offer any opposition. Nay she expressed her full desire to help me in every way."

"I came to this resolve in the month of December 1882. It was perhaps in the end of the second week of December that a great preacher of the Salvation army, Major Tucker, came to Lahore with his wife and a few workers. They held a meeting in the "Rang Mahal." I attended that meeting. Their admirable sacrifice for the cause of their religion and a short address of Mrs. Tucker silently helped to strengthen me in my contemplated step."

"It was the 15th of December and only five days more remained in my birth day. I wrote at once an application resigning my post. It was as under:—

To

The Director,
Public Instruction, Punjab.

Sir,

Having felt a call from heaven that my services are required in another sphere of life, I feel my inability to retain my present post, and consequently beg to resign it after serving the Government for the last 14 years.

I shall feel obliged by your accepting this my resignation and issuing early orders to relieve me from the office.

I beg to add with your permission that I shall consider myself as freed from my present duties after 15 days, according to the ordinary rules of Government service, unless I receive instructions from you to the contrary.

Lahore:	}	I remain
15th Dec. 1882.		Sir,
		Your most obedient
		servant,

(Sd.) S. N. AGNIHOTRI."

"I placed my resignation before Mr. Steins, Headmaster. He read it and was

literally taken aback. He was silent for some minutes and at last said:—

Headmaster—I am very sorry that you are going.

I—I am not sorry in the least.

Headmaster—Have you well considered over the matter?

I—Yes.

Headmaster—Have you got family and children?

I—Yes, a wife and three children.

Headmaster—You have duty towards God as well as towards your wife and children.

I—Certainly. But I am not going to neglect my duty towards my wife and children.

Headmaster—Will you get any pay?

I—No. I depend on the Lord. He will provide.

Headmaster—Shall I send your resignation to-day or put it off for to-morrow?

I—Please send it on to-day.

Headmaster—Are you decided?

I—Yes I am decided about it."

How the public received these news.

Bhagwan put in his resignation in the face of great material and other difficulties that confronted him and his family. He wanted no pay from any person or any society. He did not expect any emoluments even in the shape of mere honorarium from his own society of which he was an accredited worker. His supreme object for which he took a leap in the unknown waters was to save human souls from the grip of falsehood and evil, and evolve in them such higher and noble heart-forces as may enable them to end their hellish behaviour and establish higher harmony and sweet concord with various existences in nature. This was the greatest and the highest service to man. But it is indeed a tragic sight that those, for whose highest good Bhagwan threw himself body and soul in the mightiest struggle ever faced by a mighty soul, took the first and the earliest opportunity of altogether misunderstanding him, and not only placed before him the mighty blocks of determined opposition but indulged in the most gruesome task of abusing and slandering his fairest name and

tearing his reputation to thinnest shreds
Says Bhagwan:—

“As soon as I put in my resignation a mighty commotion arose all around. From the four corners began to shoot thick and fast the arrows of opposition. How was it possible for those who were devoid of the highest psychic forces that had evolved in my soul, who were blind to the existence of higher life of soul, who were themselves destitute of any longing of heart for any great and noble spiritual ideal, who were swayed by the low loves of wealth, property, fame, name, public applause or popular plaudit, power, position etc., and who were swamped by the current or popular false beliefs, superstitions and wrong practices, to comprehend, and appreciate the grandeur of the new step that I took? Hence they began to pass judgments on me from their respective standpoints of wordly wisdom. All such persons began to speak various calumnies against me. Though those who were comparatively of a better disposition did not express anything vulgar, yet they contented themselves by saying that the step that I took

was in their opinion a great blunder, especially when I had a big family. Those, who cherished feelings of hostility against me, flung poisonous darts upon me. They maligned me in various ways by calling me a cheat, a fraud etc. Only one or two persons from my own society were such, as expressed no opposition though they too did not side with me enthusiastically. A gentleman who possessed feeling of respect for me but did not approve of my step, wrote to me a frank letter about it. Some of them who had some reverence for me, expressed a desire to wait on me in deputation and talk over with me about my step. But I refused to comply with their wishes. The letter which Babu Chandra Nath Mittra wrote to Babu Navin Chandra Roy relating to this was as follows:—

My dear Navin Babu !

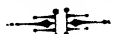
The para: in the Tribune had convinced me that all efforts to make Agnihotri recede will be useless. Yourself and others are of the same opinion. So let us drop the matter.
18th December 1882. Sincerely yours,

(Sd). CHANDRA NATH MITTRA."

CHAPTER XXVII.



Bhagwan's embracing his unique Life-Vow in a special public ceremony.



The step that Bhagwan determined to take was the most momentous step in his life. The vow that he decided to take as the supreme vow and the highest object of his life was indeed transcendental in the whole history of the world. Bhagwan rightly felt it as the most sacred thing. Hence he made both inside and outside preparations of a kind which were worthy of the occasion. Says Bhagwan:—

“After putting in my resignation I decided that four days after (i.e. on 20th December 1882 being the 32nd birthday of my life), I would embrace my unique vow in a public meeting by performing a special ceremony. A notice about it was given in the columns of the Tribune.”

“I went heart and soul in making preparations for this unique ceremony. Pandit

Navin Chandra Roy—a well-known scholar of Hindu Shastras—prepared an altogether new programme of ceremonial for this purpose. He rightly designated this new ceremonial of its kind as the “Brahm Sannyas.” This was specially done to demarcate it from the prevalent “Hindu Sannyas” with which it had no connection at all. The programme contained the following six parts:—

1. *Achar* (Behaviour).
2. *Karam* (Deed).
3. *Tiyag* (Sacrifice).
4. *Grihisthi* (Family duties.)
5. *Dharam Palan* (Adherence to duty).
6. *Brahmyog* (Union with Brahm)”

“This great ceremony was to be performed in Brahm Mandir on Wednesday, 20th December 1882 after evening fall. The Hall of Brahm Mandir was tastefully decorated previously for this ceremony. The front portion of the Hall was allotted for the seating of men and the back portion separated by a screen was reserved for ladies. On return from the school in the evening I got myself clean shaved i. e. all the hair of my head, beard and mostaches were shaved. I then took

a full bath. Thereafter I put on *Gerva* (red chalk coloured) dress which was prepared for the occasion, and accompanied by my wife and children I reached the Brahm Mandir a little before the appointed hour. I took my seat at the place previously fixed for me. Even before I entered the Hall it was full to congestion with men and women who had thronged there to witness the ceremony. Those who could get no seat kept standing in crowds in the verandahs near the doors of the Hall. This huge assemblage contained those also who cherished feelings of hostility to me though they were all God-worshippers. They had come prepared to create disturbance in the performance of this sacred ceremony owing to their wickedness. They commenced creating loud noises and whistling and hissing. These evil-natured souls had the evil intention of not allowing the ceremony to proceed to its successful end. Seeing all this I at once got up and pointing to my *geruik* dress and moved by my inner powerful higher feelings, I made a forceful appeal to them that if they did not possess any other sense of humanity, they should at least have respect

for the dress which had for centuries past commanded esteem and regard in this land. This appeal went home to them. The whole hall was hushed into dead silence. The work of the ceremony began in peace. After offering preliminary prayers Pt. Navin Chandra Roy began the work in accordance with his newly prepared course. The programme of this ceremonial was as under:—

1. *Nam Karan* (Naming ceremony).
2. Reading of Shastric injunctions with their explanation.
3. Repetition of the *mantra*.
4. Sermon from the conductor.
5. Prayer by the conductor.
6. Hymns or songs.
7. Expression of feeling by the undertaker of the vow (*i.e.* Bhagwan Dev Atma).
8. Prayer by the *Bratdhari* (*i.e.* Bhagwan).
9. Song.
10. Blessings by the conductor.
11. Blessings by others.
12. A chorus song by the members."

"The conductor seated me by himself and first put me some preliminary questions.

After I had replied to them, he, as settled before with my consent, gave me the new name of "Sattyanand." He then read some mantras from the Shastras regarding the six parts of his newly prepared course, giving their translation and here and there dilating upon their meaning. He then made me repeat the great mantra which I had accepted relating to my life-vow and which he knew already. After a short sermon, he offered prayers for the success of my unique vow. Then a song was sung. After that I got up and began to express my feelings. So far I remember my expressions were approximately these:—

'The whole of this scene to-day is a rare one. My life-vow too is completely of a unique nature. I feel myself to-day in this new dress and new form like a bride who enters into a sacred wedlock before this vast gathering of hundreds of persons after having accepted holy pledges which she means to loyally keep all through her life. I have indeed solemnized to-day another, yet an unparalleled kind of marriage. I fervently pray that in all my inner thoughts and outward deeds, I may

remain, for the whole of my life, as loyal and faithful to the supreme vow of propagating the highest beautiful Truth and Goodness to which I am pledged to-day, as a devoted and faithful wife, who, having pledged herself to a life long wedlock with her husband, makes him the highest of all her relations; who never budes an inch from her that supreme vow under all kinds of hundreds of favourable or unfavourable circumstances and conditions of life; who gives him alone the highest place in her heart, remaining true to her vow through weal and woe, good and bad fortune, health and disease, happiness and sorrow, youth and old age, beauty and deformity, fear and trials; who always remains loyal to his person and does not prove disloyal or unfaithful to him even in thought. Being a complete lover of my supreme life-vow may my whole life be spent in the service of the whole world.'

'As I have embraced the mission of the good of the whole world, it is but inevitable for me to live in this world and struggle hard to destroy, as far as possible, the reign of untruth and evil whenever and wherever existing in various relations of mankind, and to

create and establish in its stead the reign of truth and goodness. Hence my renunciation will not at all be of the nature of the renunciation of those selfish Sadhus, *Bairagies*, *Sanyasis* and *Fakirs* of this land who believe in breaking off various ties of relationship and abandon all the right responsibilities in connection with them. My renunciation would rightly consist in making all kinds of sacrifices of wealth, fame, popularity, happiness, comfort, health and power etc., which may be necessary in fulfilling my highly difficult mission. I have to make the most arduous struggles for it in converting human souls from the life of low loves and low hates, whereby they have created various kinds of falsehoods and evils making this earth a veritable hell, and rendered all connections and relations most harmful for one another, and whereby they have dethroned living religion of higher life and enthroned irreligious or lower life in their hearts. They have thus produced in all their various relations terrible misery, pain, sorrow and agony resulting in pitiable cries and lamentations. I have to evolve in their hearts higher forces of higher life in place of all that. This kind of complete

sacrifice or *Tiyag* in the fulfilment of my highest mission will be my True *Sannyas*.'

'For a long time I had had to pass through a great mental struggle in connection with my this life-vow. On the one hand I felt in my heart an urge from God to take this step, and on the other, my financial difficulties and various other prospective troubles and sufferings loomed large before me, standing as a bar in my way of taking this great leap in the unknown. But in this great conflict, my higher powers of higher life ultimately triumphed. Life of Mahatma Buddha considerably helped me in my decision. My resolution became more firm. I realized that I was born with a definite destiny of accomplishing this great life-vow. With this truth growing clearer before me, I put in my resignation from my Government service on Friday last. And to-day in this public gathering I take up this unique vow with complete earnestness of heart and feelings of genuine joy and intense enthusiasm.'

'From to-day this my life-vow would be the supreme factor in all my dealings with others. From to-day I would regulate my relations with you all keeping this highest

spiritual ideal as a pole star before me. To do everything for its success would be the supreme work of my life.'

'In conclusion I beg some alms of you all in furtherance of the success of my life-vow. Don't take alarm at the word 'alms.' The alms that I pray of you are nothing but benedictions. Those of you present here who enjoy youth should bestow upon me the ardour of your blooming youth. Those of you who are old and have grown indifferent to one or the other worldly ambition may tender to me the gift of that feeling. Those of you who are children may grant me your innocence and quietude of mind; and the chaste and pure-minded ladies among you may bless me with your feeling of chastity and fidelity.'

"These expressions of my feelings very perceptibly moved the hearts of majority in the big audience and many of the men and women were seen shedding tears and even sobbing. In the end I prayed. Thereafter, the conductor and some others offered their blessings and expressed good wishes. This unique ceremony came to a close with an inspirational song."

CHAPTER XXVIII.



How Bhagwan felt after this step.

How Bhagwan Dev Atma felt after he had publicly taken this unique step, is better expressed in his own words:—

“Immediately after I put in my resignation, I felt my heart wonderfully elevated. After the great ceremony was over, I felt myself in an altogether new world. All my higher forces grew more powerful and illuminating. A new light flooded my heart. As a captive feels free and happy when, on the expiry of the term of his imprisonment, his handcuffs are taken off and he is released, so did I feel myself not only free and happy but hundreds of times more blessed. I actually felt myself as a fish would feel which, when stranded for some time on dry land, is cast again into welcome waters. I felt as if every kingdom of evolutionary Nature which had been struggling for ages to produce this beneficent phenomenon blessed me, by hundreds of mute but eloquent

tongues. These mute but most glorious blessings considerably inspired and enthused my heart which vibrated to the notes of pure and most felicitous experiences. I felt that now the grand object of my birth on this earth had been fulfilled to some extent."

Bhagwan continued to go to the school after this ceremony for 3 or 4 days when the school closed for 7 or 8 days on account of Christmas holidays. When the holidays were over Bhagwan pressed hard that he may be relieved from his duties. His application of resignation was mislaid somewhere. His friends jumped to the conclusion that that was a God-given hint that he should not resign. But Bhagwan never believed in this absurd notion. And once resolved on an action, he could never be swayed to the contrary by any adverse combination of circumstances. He put in a fresh copy of the application when he was at last relieved from the school duties after a few days. With phenomenal energy and devotion of unprecedented kind, he now threw himself heart and soul into the struggle for accomplishment of his unique Life-Vow.

While explaining his life-mission, Bhag-

wan had publicly declared, as if from house-tops, that it did not make any difference in the least whether a man was literate or illiterate, polytheist or monothiest, so long he was enslaved to low loves and low hates, he must develop a life of sin and undue attachments. The outward profession of such a man of a belief in God was a rank mockery. He made it clear to men in general that so long as they did not awaken to the consciousness of sin and struggled to get freedom from it, and so long as they did not develop feeling of true purity and unselfish service of others, they should neither expect any true salvation from the life of sin and undue attachments and their consequent miseries, nor any true and higher good of their souls or their country.

Says Bhagwan Dev Atma in his Autobiography, Volume I, page 93:—

“I fully realized that so long as any man did not grow definite consciousness of the horrors of the life of sin and undue attachments (or life of low loves and low hates) and did not develop higher love of getting freedom from that low life and evolving higher life in himself, all his reading of

Concluding Remarks.

The hymn which was composed and sung by Bhagwan Dev Atma at the time of the above historic ceremony contained the following memorable couplet which embodied his Life-Vow or Supreme Mission of Life:—

*“Satya Shiv Sunder hi mera param
laksh hove,*

Jag ke upkar hi men jiwan yeh jave.”

Translated into English it runs:—

“May beautiful Truth and Goodness,
My foremost aim represent;
And in the service of the world,
May my life be fully spent.”

Ideals of all persons differ according to their heart forces. Whether a man declares his ideal or not, his loves and hates determine an ideal for him and colour all his thoughts, desires, longings and activities. Those who possess any love for money, fame, name, power, position, etc., would stand betrayed, however much they may endeavour to cloak that and pass for something else. He was right who said that a man can deceive some persons for some time, but it is impossible to deceive all persons for all time.

Believing in the absolute truth of these experiences, we know that all efforts of the followers of old faiths, to show their founders not as they were but as the present humanity wishes them to have been, have come to naught. Christ came not to liberate mankind from the life of sin, corruption, undue attachments, etc. (i.e. low loves and low hates); nor did he aim at evolving higher life in his followers. He came to offer forgiveness of sins to those who would believe in him and his father. It is curious that this childish ideal fascinates even the educated and cultured Christians. They are not able to see that sin like disease cannot be forgiven but it has to be cured. The causes of sin are low loves and low hates. It is these from whose grip man is to be liberated. And so long as they remain in tact, sin shall follow as a matter of course. Prophet of Islam came as a Warner that those who did not believe in his God and him as His last Messenger and the revelation of Quran through him, will go to hell. He held out thunders of hell for unbelievers and material joys for believers. But when we know that God is a huge myth, we can understand of

what value these Christian and Islamic ideals are. The Hindus, Buddhists, Sikhs etc. laid before mankind the absurd ideal of getting free from the bondage of rebirths, when the doctrine of rebirth itself is a fiction. This ideal is also fanciful and a chimera.

In fact freedom from pain and attainment of happiness constitutes the ideal of all the so-called religious faiths, as that was the psychology of all founders, and they could not escape their limitations. Happiness as an ideal is opposed to the very law of life.

There is not a single founder of any faith who so much as understood the nature of low loves and low hates. When the very knowledge was absent, the diagnosis of the disease could not be expected. Hence it was a mere dream to hope for a cure. The knowledge of the causes of sin was absent, because the light which could reveal the nature of soul was absent. This light was absent because the highest psychic forces of highest life (*Dev Shakties*) which alone could generate that light were totally absent not only in the founders of the world faiths, but even in their so-called God, Allah, Khuda

etc. Hence besides giving absolutely unscientific and wrong teachings about universe and man, they indulged in Arabian Night stories about soul and its destiny. They have named soul but failed utterly to know the anatomy of soul.

Bhagwan Dev Atma's ideal was to liberate man from low loves and low hates which lead him to life of untruth and evil and develop in him higher or altruistic forces and thus create a new species of mankind.

As far back as January 1887, when before establishing his own unique society, the Dev Samaj, Bhagwan had been compelled by certain unpleasant circumstances created by some prominent members of Brahmo Samaj to sever all his connection with that society, a deputation consisting of eleven members of the Brahmo Samaj Managing Committee came to wait upon Bhagwan in order to request him to continue his lectures in their Mandir. Bhagwan then had full faith in God. But the reply which he gave to this deputation will ever remain memorable to show the true glory and reality of his ideal, differentiating it from the ideals cherished

by the theistic creeds all over. In the course of his reply to them, Bhagwan said:—

“I am not born to teach or make men repeat merely some such *Stotars* or hymns which may contain the name of one God instead of many gods or goddesses, or that people should repeat early morning and evening the name of God while leading a life of ordinary gentleman in the eyes of the world. My mission consists in removing all this state and in growing new life in souls, giving them true salvation and developing in them true higher life, and thus by liberating them from sinful life on this planet and rendering all their relations pure and noble to enrich them with the blessings of *Dharam Jiwan*.”

At another place Bhagwan said:—

“I want to establish heaven on this earth. I want to usher on this earth that age and that religion which should be destructive here on this earth of all sins, evils and wrongs and which should develop here on this earth such higher and trustworthy people who should establish higher harmony and sweet concord in all their mutual relations; which should give true liberty to man

(from low loves and low hates) and evolve in him that stage of higher character which should enable him not only to prove serviceable and useful to mankind but to all such living existences with which he may have or med ome relation. In the evolution of higher character of this kind in fit souls and in giving to this planet that higher leaven, shall lie the real fulfilment of my mission. It is then and then alone that the true glory of my mission would shine bright before the world."

How supremely grand this ideal ! and how altogether different it is from the ideal of those who missed this real work and who wasted their energies in calling mankind to form relation with an altogether mythical being called Allah, Khuda, Parmatma etc., and to dream of some heavens after death !!



